

# goal!

W e e k l y

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## VPL ROUND 1

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Front cover: dandenong Thunder's Shane Rexhepi celebrates scoring in his team's 2-1 win over Melbourne Knights on Saturday

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**News Room:** 03 9551 7538  
**Advertising:** 03 9551 7538

**Email:** news@goalweekly.com  
**Letters:** mailbag@goalweekly.com  
**Web:** www.goalweekly.com

**Editor:** Costa Koutropoulos  
**Art Director:** Carlos Ibarra  
**Design:** Ivan Andreevski

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**GW Hall of Fame - Contributors**  
Nat Adamopoulos, Mark Boric, Bruce Darnell, Andrew Fisher, Roy Hay, Markian Jaworsky, George Katsamboukas, Eddie Krncevic, Bart Hulley, John Kyrou, Sebastian Kipman, George Kouroumalis, Michael Liliakakis, Josip Loncaric, Craig MacKenzie, Jeremy O'Neil, Teo Pellizzeri, Walter Pless, Tony Persoglia, Julius Ross, Roger Sleeman, Mike Salter, George Stogiannou, Reuben Schembri, Lachlan Taylor, Elias Simopoulos, Michal Skrodsky, Addy Wetzler, Bruno Zovko.

**Photographers**  
Adam Butler, Therese Duffy, Daniel Flis, Dean Grant, Geoff Jones, Peter Kakalias, Darryl Kennedy, Lee McCormick, Mark McGeady, John Punshon, Brett Robson, Steve Starek, George Stogiannou.

# ZEBRAS HIT THEIR STRIPES

The Whittlesea Zebras FC participated in the final of the Doncaster Preseason tournament, taking on underdog Nunawading City at the home ground of the Doncaster Rovers on Saturday 27th February.

The Zebras finished top of the four teams in the group stages and contested the tournament's final against Nunawading City FC.

The Whittlesea Zebras FC senior team, qualified as group leaders, after depositing of lesser ranked teams Doncaster and Moreland City on its way to the final.

The club used the tournament as a venue to trial many new players hoping to represent the Zebras in 2010.

Of the team that took to the field on Saturday, many first team regulars were missing, most noticeably Greg Lombardo and Arthur Tsonis.

Some of the new recruits for the Zebras made brief first appearances for the club in the final, including the likes of new striker Marty Collins and recruit Ralph Napoli, participating after a long lay off with injury.

After a scoreless first half, Nunawading took the lead against the run of play

after 60 minutes, with an excellent strike worthy of winning any encounter. The Zebras wasted many chances after dominating possession throughout the match, but with 10 minutes to go, the equaliser came and meant that the game would be decided on penalties, (with no extra time being played), so as to obtain a result.

Nunawading won the shootout 6-5, in what was a remarkable result against higher ranked opposition players, most of which have had experience in playing in some of Victoria's highest leagues.



# JAMIESON GLAD TO HAVE FOUND HIS FEET AGAIN

Scott Jamieson can feel the form from his stellar first season at Adelaide United FC coming back, after playing his part in the Reds' win over the Pohang Steelers.

Following the match with the Steelers, Jamieson seemed somewhat relieved and at the same time delighted to be rediscovering the football that saw him take out the Hyundai A-League Rising Star Award in 2008/09.

Having set extremely high standards in his first 12 months in Adelaide, the 21 year old admits he has found the going tougher in his second season. He made the position on the Reds' left side of defence his own in 2008/09 starting in all but one match, while he also played every minute in the AFC Champions League 2008 Knockout Stage, his performances earning him his first senior national cap.

But in 2009/10, his spot in the side has not always been a given, and Jamieson struggled to find the same consistency. Some could suggest he has suffered from the second year blues, which can affect players who had impressive debut seasons. However Jamieson still managed 24 out of the Reds' 27 Hyundai A-League games in the season just completed, and over the past month the rhythm and groove in Jamieson's game seems to be back, which is something he is pleased about.

"It's a good feeling," Jamieson said.

"I've just tried to keep it simple in the last 3-4 weeks since I got back into the team, it has been enjoyable and luckily I'm finding my feet at the right time."

Jamieson has certainly picked the right time, as the Reds have won their past three matches, including the scalp of the reigning ACL champions. The United back four kept Pohang scoreless, the accomplishment maintaining a remarkable record with the Reds yet to concede a goal against the Korean club in their three encounters.

"It's good to be back in Asia and competing against the best," Jamieson said.

The former Bolton Wanderers defender did not get long to enjoy the win over the Steelers though, as he was on an early morning flight to the Gold Coast with fellow Reds Eugene Galekovic, Mathew Leckie and Michael Marrone to check into camp with the Qantas Socceroos for the AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Indonesia on Wednesday.

After being selected in the initial squad but missing out on a spot in the final team for Australia's last AFC Asian Cup qualifier in Kuwait, Jamieson hopes this time around might be different. With the World Cup only months away, the match will be a chance for players to press their claims for a place in South Africa, but Jamieson believes it would



Adelaide United's Scott Jamieson

be ridiculous to have him in the frame at the moment.

"I don't think I'm anywhere near the World Cup right now. If I'm talking about that then I'm a silly boy, so it's just about trying to get in the team for the game against Indonesia, tak-

ing my chance and then going from there," Jamieson said.

"It's a game where I hopefully can get a run and do well."

Australia's match against Indonesia is on Wednesday 3 March 2010 at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane (Kick-Off 7.30pm ACDT).

# Houllier pulls out of conference

Football Federation Australia (FFA) is disappointed to confirm that Gerard Houllier can no longer attend the 2010 FFA National Coaching Conference.

The 2010 FFA National Coaches Conference will be held over the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of March and will include an in-depth tactical analysis of the AFC Asian Cup qualifier between the Qantas Socceroos and Indonesia at Suncorp Stadium with all other practical elements to be held at Sheldon Sports and Entertainment Centre.

The 2010 FFA National Coaches Conference will still include keynote addresses from FFA National Technical Director Han Berger, Qantas Socceroos Head Coach Pim Verbeek, renowned football conditioning expert Raymond Verheijen and a panel discussion with Andy Harper, Mike Cockerill, Craig Foster, Ray Junna, Paul Okon, Mark Williams and former Argentina striker Abel Balbo.

FFA CEO Ben Buckley will end the conference with a closing address on Thursday.



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# NORTH LEAVES SOCCEROO CAMP

**Qantas Socceroos Head Coach Pim Verbeek has given permission for Jade North to leave the camp which is preparing for the upcoming AFC Asian Cup 2011 Qualifier against Indonesia, presented by FOXTEL, which will be played at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane on Wednesday 3 March 2010.**

North is in the final stages of transferring from K-League club Incheon United to Norwegian "Tippeligaen" Club, Tromsø, and will leave Brisbane on Saturday to meet up with his new club in Turkey to undergo a final medical test.

North had consulted Verbeek throughout the transfer process and the Qantas Socceroos Head Coach understood why North had to leave camp early.

"I am very happy for Jade to find an-

other club and it appears to be the right time to leave Korea so he can give himself the best chance to be selected for the FIFA World Cup in South Africa," Verbeek said.

"He is going to play in a very difficult league and if he can play regular football he will be much better off," concluded Verbeek

As a result of North's departure, Verbeek has called up Adelaide United defender Robert Cornthwaite. Cornthwaite made his debut for the Qantas Socceroos in the AFC Asian Cup 2011 qualifier against Kuwait in Canberra last year.

The Qantas Socceroos drew 0-0 with Indonesia the last time they clashed in the opening match of the AFC Asian Qualifiers in Jakarta in January 2009.

The Qantas Socceroos are currently

placed in second position of the Group B points table behind Kuwait on the number of goals scored and will need a draw or a win against Indonesia to qualify for the AFC Asian Cup 2011 which will be held in Qatar in January 2011. In the other group B match, Oman will need a win if they hope to qualify for the AFC Asian Cup 2011 when they host Kuwait in Muscat on Wednesday 3 March.

**AFC Asian Cup 2011 qualifier – presented by FOXTEL  
Australia v Indonesia  
Wednesday 3 March 2010  
Kick-Off: 7:00pm AEST (8:00pm AEDT, 7:30pm ACDT, 5:30pm AWST)  
Gates Open: 5.30pm  
Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane**



Jade North

THE SQUAD	
Clint BOLTON	Josh KENNEDY
Alex BROSQUE	Mathew LECKIE
Jacob BURNS	Michael MARRONE
Shannon COLE	Daniel McBREEN
Simon COLOSIMO	Jonathan McKAIN
Robert CORNTHWAITE	Matthew McKAY
Jason CULINA	Mark MILLIGAN
Luke DEVERE	Stuart MUSIALIK
Andrew DURANTE	Tommy OAR
Eugene GALEK-OVIC	Mile STERJOVSKI
Scott JAMIESON	Matt THOMPSON
Ben KANTAROVSKI	Danny VUKOVIC
	David WILLIAMS
	Luke WILKSHIRE
	Michael ZULLO

## TIATTO TO PLAY FOR KNIGHTS



**PRODIGAL son Danny Tiatto has returned to his old stomping ground, the Melbourne Knights.**

The 23-cap Socceroo appears set to end his career with a guest stint at the club at which he made his name, after agreeing to his return with Knights president Ange Cimera earlier today.

He is likely to play the club's opening two home games – the first against Heidelberg United on Monday March 8 – before deciding on his future.

"We're absolutely rapt," Cimera said, adding Tiatto had signed as an amateur and would play for free.

"What he is saying is that he got his name here through the Melbourne Knights. He originally said he'll play our first two home games ... then he'll see how he feels and how his body takes it and he'll then decide what to do."

Tiatto, 36, left A-League club Brisbane this season after falling out with coach Ange Postecoglou.

**The Qantas Futsalroos have won the 2010 AFC Futsal Championship ASEAN Zone qualifiers after defeating Indonesia 3-0 in tonight's final played in Jakarta.**

Having qualified for the 2010 AFC Futsal Championship by finishing as one of the top three nations from the tournament, the Qantas Futsalroos were looking to add some silverware to their already successful campaign. The Qantas Futsalroos had the psychological advantage over their opponents going into the match as they had previously defeated the host nation 4-1 in the group phase of the competition.

Qantas Futsalroos midfielder Toby Seeto continued his fine tournament form by opening the scoring after just seven minutes following some good team build up play. Indonesia had a few chances afterwards to equalise, but the Qantas Futsalroos goalkeeper Angelo Konstantinou was up to the challenge and pulled off a number of crucial saves to keep his sheet clean.

Within seconds of the start of the second half, the Qantas Futsalroos doubled their advantage when Dean Lockhart slid his shot in at the far post after being set-up by an Adrian Vizzari pass.

The result was sealed in the 38th minute when Toby Seeto scored his fifth goal of the tournament with a fine solo effort that ended with a stinging left-footed shot which propelled the ball into the roof of the net.

Qantas Futsalroos Head Coach, Steven Knight was ecstatic that his team achieved their two goals of qualifying for the 2010 AFC Futsal Championship and winning the qualification tournament.

"The first half was a very even contest with both teams having plenty of opportunities to score," said Knight

"Our players were very patient, held possession and defended well in front of a very large vocal home crowd.

"The team unity throughout the tournament has been fantastic.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to coach such a talented group of players and we're looking forward to our next challenge in Tashkent," concluded Knight.

In the third place play-off, Vietnam defeated Malaysia 6-3 in extra time after the scores were locked at 3-3 at the end of regular time.

The Qantas Futsalroos will now fo-

cus their attention towards the 2010 AFC Futsal Championships which will be played in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 23-30 May.

**Qantas Futsalroos Squad  
AFC Futsal Championship ASEAN Zone qualifiers  
20-25 February 2010**

*Joshua Codrington (Dural Warriors, NSW), Roger Cua (Mascot Vipers, NSW), Fernando De Moraes (North Melbourne FC, VIC), Miles Downie (Sporting Club Vila Verde, Portugal), Daniel Fogarty (NSW Thunder, NSW), Rhys Giovanali (Dural Warriors, NSW), Greg Giovanali (Salaria Sporting Village, Italy), Simon Keith (Maccabi Futsal, NSW), Angelo Konstantinou (Boomerangs FS, ACT), Dean Lockhart (Campbelltown City Quake, NSW), Pat Ross-Magee (Boomerangs FS, ACT), Tom Rogic (ANU, ACT), Tobias Seeto (Lanzarote Tias Yaiza, Spain), Adrian Vizzari (Inner West Allstars, NSW).*

**Team Officials**  
*Head Coach - Steven Knight (NSW)  
Assistant Coach - Robert Varela (NSW)  
Goalkeeper Coach - Roger Cua (ACT)*

Physiotherapist - Michael Sette (VIC) Team Manager - Matt Sheppard (FFA)	
Group A	
	P W D L F A GD Pts
AUSTRALIA	2 2 0 0 10 2 8 6
INDONESIA	2 1 0 1 8 5 3 3
MYANMAR	2 0 0 2 2 13 -11 0
Group B	
	P W D L F A GD Pts
MALAYSIA	3 2 1 0 19 4 15 7
VIETNAM	3 2 1 0 18 5 13 7
PHILIPPINES	3 1 0 2 10 12 -2 3
CAMBODIA	2 0 0 3 7 33 -26 0
RESULTS	
Australia 6:1 Myanmar	
Malaysia 4:1 Philippines	
Vietnam 2:2 Cambodia	
Myanmar 1:7 Indonesia	
Philippines 1:4 Vietnam	
Cambodia 1:13 Malaysia	
Australia 4:1 Indonesia	
Malaysia 2:2 Vietnam	
Cambodia 4:8 Philippines	
Malaysia 3:5 Indonesia	
Australia 4:1 Vietnam	
Malaysia 3:6 Vietnam	
Indonesia 0:3 Australia	

# BIG-MATCH IN HOT DEMAND

**WELLINGTON Phoenix FC's elimination semifinal against the Newcastle Jets at Westpac Stadium on Sunday, March 7, is proving the hottest ticket in town, with less than 5000 seats left for the big match.**

The 34,500-capacity Westpac Stadium is expected to be sold out and Phoenix chief executive Tony Pignata is urging fans to secure their tickets quickly.

"We're already close to capacity at

Westpac Stadium after just five days of ticket sales. The game is certain to be a sell-out and the remaining tickets won't last long.

"There are still excellent seats available and I'm sure people won't want to miss out on what is going to be another historic match."

More than 24,000 people roared the Phoenix to victory against Perth Glory at Westpac Stadium in a nail-biting match last weekend. With a full house certain

for the do-or-die clash with the Jets, the atmosphere at the Phoenix's fortress will again be electric.

"Every single person who was at Westpac Stadium last weekend experienced an incredible spectacle packed with drama, excitement and jubilation," said Pignata. "Just imagine what the atmosphere generated by a capacity crowd will be like on March 7."

The club and Positively Wellington Tourism have also launched the "Yell-

out for a Sell-out" campaign, encouraging fans at the match against the Jets to show their support for the Phoenix by wearing black and yellow.

"It'll be incredible to see 34,500 people all dressed in Phoenix colours roaring the team on," said Pignata. "The guys get a huge lift from the massive crowd support and we're going to need to help of everyone at Westpac Stadium to get the win against the Jets."

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# Reds shock Champs

By Nat Adamopoulos

ADELAIDE United FC's opening to the 2010 AFC Champions League brought about some redemption for the club and its fans, as it recorded a tenacious 1-0 victory against reigning champions Pohang Steelers at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Young speedster Matthew Leckie scoring the only goal for the match with a well orchestrated run downfield right on half time, charging his way into the box to overcome a trio of Pohang defenders and keeper Shin Hwa Yong. Defender Park Heechul attempted a clearance which deflected off Leckies boot and through the keeper to give him his first goal in the ACL, bringing the 8,374 strong crowd to their feet roaring with elation as the Reds went into the half time break.

The jubilation was evident in the face of Red's Coach Joe Mullen in his press conference interview.

"It was a good performance by the players. The defence was sound, we had done a lot of work on that and it worked pretty well. Our attacking movement was good when we could go forward" he said.

"The first 15-20 minutes was tough, Pohang area a very good football team but we weathered the storm and I thought we did that very well".

"To get the goal right at the death of half time was a perfect time to score and that was through sheer endeavour, commitment and tenacity from Leckie. I thought that mirrored our performance of the whole team tonight, I thought the players were fantastic. He (Leckie) can fight with the ball sometimes technically, but he's got raw speed and aggression in the attacking third and he puts defenders on the back foot. He's a terrific prospect" Mullen added.

"The atmosphere has been good spirited at training and our A-League acquisitions have been good. The calibre of players like Van Dijk and Flores have given the players that belief".

It wasn't the ideal of openings though for Adelaide, apart from an early opportunity from talented youngster Michael Marrone in the 5th minute, the homeside were forced to defend against an attacking Pohang team full of stars including four Korean internationals but without key defender and national team player Kim Hyung-il. Alexandro gave the visitors the first opportunity to score in the first 5 minutes of the match, his shot going wide of the right post. Brazilian Mota featured shortly after with a glancing header not quite making its mark, then backing it up with yet another chance from a freekick in the 18th minute that shaved past the upright. Pohang continually found space, opening up the field with the speed and strong leads from 2009 AFC Champions League MVP Byung Jin, renowned for his tireless running and ability to score goals.



Matthew Leckie turns away after steering the ball into the back of the net. PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

Adelaide took their time to settle into the match, a lack of ball control their downfall, too frequently turning over possession.

Adelaide's Marcos Flores was instrumental in changing the flow of the match at the 22nd minute mark, winning a ball 30metres out and with finesse, executing a great turn to pass to Dodd, the captain blasting the shot over the cross-bar. As the game went on, new-signings Flores and Sergio Van Dijk were providing some spark partnering up, Flores producing some creative passes and Van Dijk looking threatening with his work rate and efforts in the air. On the half hour, the Red's midfield was very much coming into form, some promising possession football coming care of Flores, Van Dijk and Pantelis, the latter taking a shot that ran across the face of Hwa Yong's goal.

In the 38th minute Pohang's Mota had another scoring opportunity, his shot just clearing the cross bar which charged up a more threatening Pohang as the first 45 minutes were coming to an end. Then the Red's counterattack that stunned the Steelers, when in one minute of added time, a pacey Leckie took the ball on his own upfield, going on a solo run to charge fearlessly into the box to a crowded Pohang defence. With congestion causing confusion, Pohang's Heechul attempted a clearance, only to have it deflect off the boot of Leckie, beating the Steelers keeper to produce what was the eventual winner.

Fans were entertained with a rejuvenated Adelaide in the second half, Pantelis, Leckie, Van Dijk and Dodd all featuring strongly. Dodd's most promising opportunity coming in the 62nd minute from a well placed pass care of Van



Iain Fyfe doesn't hold back as Pohang's Alexandro goes to ground. PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

Dijk, the captain shooting just wide of his intended target.

Mullen made his second substitution in the 75th minute, bringing on Fabian Barbiero after Flores received a knock to his back, Barbiero maintaining the Reds strong form. Sergio Van Dijk almost created his dream debut in the 84th minute, taking a curling freekick that just narrowly missed the goal. A committed Reds held strong as Pohang were threatening right to the final blow of the whistle, the victory bringing with it a repeat of their 2008 ACL opening match against the Steelers and a good start on the road to redemption for their worst ever performance in the Hyundai A-League.

Adelaide's next match on March 10 will see them face up to China's most

successful club of the modern era, Shandong Luneng at the Shandong Sports Centre, Jinan.

**Match Details**  
**Adelaide United 1 (Leckie 45 +1')**  
**Pohang Steelers 0**  
**Crowd: 8,374 @ Hindmarsh Stadium**  
**Referee: Mohsen Basma (Syria)**

**Adelaide United: 1.Eugene GALEKOVIC (gk), 2. Robert CORNTHWAITE, 4. Ian FYFE, 5. Daniel MULLEN, 7. Lucas PANTELIS (10. Adam HUGHES 90+2'), 9 Sergio VAN DIJK, 13 Travids DODD (Captain), 14.Scott JAMIESON, 17, Michael MARRONE (27 Adam Griffiths 63'), 19. Matther LECKIE, 24 Marcos FLORES (18. Fabian BARBIERO 76')**

Sydney FC on 7 March and then back up with a vital home win two days later against Seongnam Ilhwa from Korea in the Asian Champions League. If Merrick can pull that off he will be a magician.

Failure in Sydney will see Victory into an extra game, the Preliminary Final. against the winner of Wellington Phoenix and Newcastle Jets, and while a full strength and fit set of players would be expected to win against either, the walking wounded will do well to take the game to a penalty decider.

Kevin Muscat can't take all the kicks



## Round 1

### Group A

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
AL GHARAF (QAT)	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
ESTEGHLAL (IRN)	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
AL AHLI (KSA)	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
AL JAZIRA (UAE)	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0

AL JAZIRA (UAE)-AL GHARAF (QAT) 1:2  
AL AHLI (KSA)-ESTEGHLAL (IRN) 1:2

### Group B

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
BUNYODKOR (UZB)	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
ZOBAHAN (IRN)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
AL WAHDA (UAE)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
AL ITTIHAD (KSA)	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0

BUNYODKOR (UZB)-AL ITTIHAD (KSA) 3:0  
ZOBAHAN (IRN)-AL WAHDA (UAE) 1:0

### Group C

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
PAKHTAKOR (UZB)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
AL SHABAB (KSA)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
FOOLAD SEPAHAN (IRN)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
AL AIN (UAE)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0

AL AIN (UAE)-PAKHTAKOR (UZB) 0:1  
AL SHABAB (KSA)-FOOLAD MOB SEPAHAN (IRN) 1:1

### Group D

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
AL HILAL (KSA)	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
MES KERMAN (IRN)	1	1	0	0	4	2	2	3
AL AHLI (UAE)	1	0	0	1	2	4	-2	0
AL SADD (QAT)	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0

AL SADD (QAT)-AL HILAL (KSA) 0:3  
MES KERMAN (IRN)-AL AHLI (UAE) 4:2

### Group E

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
SEONGNAM ILHWA FC (KOR)	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
BEIJING GUOAN (CHN)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

SEON ILHWA FC (KOR)-KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) 2:0  
BEIJING GUOAN (CHN)-MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) 1:0

### Group F

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
JEONBUK MOTORS (KOR)	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	3
KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
CHANGCHUN YATAI FC (CHN)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
PERSIPURA JAYAPURA (IDN)	1	0	0	1	1	4	-3	0

PERS JAYAPURA (IDN)-JEONBUK MOTORS (KOR) 1:4  
KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)-CHANGCHUN YATAI (CHN) 1:0

### Group G

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
GAMBA OSAKA (JPN)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
HENAN JIANYE (CHN)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
S'PORE ARM FORCES (SIN)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)-GAMBA OSAKA (JPN) 0:0  
HENAN JIANYE (CHN)-SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES FC (SIN) 0:0

### Group H

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-	Pts
ADELAIDE UNITED (AUS)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
SHANDONG LUNENG (CHN)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
POHANG STEELERS (KOR)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
SANFRECCE HIROSH (JPN)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0

SANFRECCE HIROS (JPN)-SHANDONG LUNENG (CHN) 0:1  
ADELAIDE UNITED (AUS)-POHANG STEELERS (KOR) 1:0

**Yellow Cards: Fyfe 62', Mullen 65'**  
**Red Cards: Nil**

**Pohang Steelers: 1. Shin HWA YONG (gk), 2. Park HEECHUL, 3. Kim KWANGSUK, 5. Kim TAESUNG (18 ALMIR 82'), 7. Kim JAESUNG (8. Hwang JINSUNG 71'), 9. Alexandro, 10. MOTA, 20 Shin HYUNG-MIN, 22 No BYUNGJUN (23. Ryu CHANGHYUN 64'), 24 Hwang JAE WON (captain), 32 Kim HYUNGIL**

**Yellow Cards: Jae Won 83'**  
**Red Cards: Nil**

# Victory out of its depth

By Roy Hay

THROUGHOUT this season the mantra from Merrick, Ernie that is, the coach of Melbourne Victory, has been that the club had strength in depth for the first time.

To those watching from the sidelines

it always seemed a hollow claim and unfortunately it is being exposed at the business end of the season.

Despite having the best physical and physiological support staff in the A-League the horrendous run of injuries to key players, Kevin Muscat at the start of the season, plus his suspension near the end, Billy Celeski, Archie Thompson, Matthew Kemp, Robbie Kruse, Grant Brebner and Evan Berger, has left the cupboard bare.

Then Nik Mrdja got himself sent off for an immature elbowing of Shannon Cole and thus suspended for two games, un-

less an unlikely appeal comes off.

Ball possession statistics are notoriously rubbery, but against Beijing Guoan on Tuesday, the reported shares on the FFA website sometimes climbed to 80 per cent for the home team.

No wonder Merrick bemoaned his players' inability to retain possession.

Having to replace Surat Sukha by Berger at half-time, and then after 15 minutes, Berger by young Matthew Foschini, showed just how stretched the Victory's resources have become.

So it will take a miracle for Victory to hold its slender lead against a rampant

unfortunately.

So the odds are strongly on a really depressing end to a very good season and little chance of making an impression in the ACL.

Being a fellow Scot, I can do lugubrious and pessimistic even better than the Victory coach, and I really do hope I am wrong.

Thank goodness I have never been a betting man, for the heart would have to give way to the head. But perhaps that is really an omen for next season, when there will be a local derby!



# HODGSON v. PINES



By Craig MacKenzie

**FORMER Frankston Pines senior coach Doug Hodgson is suing the club for over \$8000 plus additional costs and expenses.**

Hodgson’s solicitors served Pines with a formal claim in late August for monies allegedly owed during his 2008 coaching stint with the Monterey Reserve outfit.

Hodgson’s claim covers an 18-week period from 22 April to 24 August in 2008.

The matter originally was listed for hearing at Frankston Magistrate’s Court on 18 January but went to arbitration where the parties remained deadlocked.

Pines president Dianne Morris Thomas and daughter Tamara, who sits on the club committee, Hodgson and legal representatives from both camps attended the arbitration meeting.

It is believed that at that meeting Pines offered to pay Hodgson \$50 a week for five months a year until full payment is reached but the offer was rejected.

Failure to resolve the matter has led to a hearing being listed at Frankston Magistrate’s Court on Friday morning (5 March).

“If clubs can’t afford to pay then they shouldn’t operate in that environment,” said Hodgson.

“I don’t think people understand what’s involved in coaching in terms of hours. I was there (at Pines) three nights a week as well as the weekend matches and I took on a job with the expectation that I would be paid as agreed.

“I’m not the only one out there that’s owed money by clubs but I’m the only one having a crack. It’s the principle involved. At the end of the day

I’m standing up for all the coaches and all the players who are owed money.

“FFV shouldn’t sanction games involving any clubs that fail to pay coaches or players and I’ll be phoning them about that.

“I’ve got no pity for Pines any more. It’s a shame because my father and mother and a lot of other people I know put a lot into that club to get it up and running but look at it now.”

Hodgson is a former Pines junior who went on to forge a successful professional career in England with Sheffield United and Oldham. He had loan stints with Plymouth Argyle, Burnley and Northampton Town.

He is a former Heidelberg United defender and also has coached the Greek-backed outfit.

He is the only Australian to have coached professionally in the English leagues having had a stint as reserves manager at Sheffield United.

Hodgson replaced Adam Jamieson partway through the 2008 Victorian Premier League season with Pines propping up the league ladder. The club was winless with just two points from nine games.

Pines picked up 15 points from the next 17 games which included some famous scalps, Green Gully and Oakleigh among them.

It still was not enough to lift the club off bottom spot.

Last season Hodgson assisted Stuart Munro at Victorian Premier League high flyer Dandenong Thunder.

• *Editor’s note: Last week we mistakenly ran a dated story on this matter which had been posted on our website late last year. Apologies to all concerned*



Flashback to 2008: Pines coach Doug Hodgson (centre), Matt Morris-Thomas (left) and Craig Metcalfe. Photo: DARRYL KENNEDY.

## BETTER LATE THAN NEVER DEPT.

**IN last week’s GW we introduced you to our ‘Dream Team’ for 2010. Unfortunately, some of our squad were still in the dressing rooms putting their shorts on when the team photo was being taken. So without further ado, please meet the rest of the gang.**

### Peter Psarros



My name is Peter Psarros i am a photog-rapher for Goal Maga-zine i also have a web-site which will be up and running soon called

smileforpeter.com  
I started playing soccer when i was 17 years old after playing Aussie Rules Football before that.  
Soccer was meant to be kick around with some mates but within 8 years of start-ing soccer i was playing in the NSL.  
I have won all goal scoring awards from Division 2 to Premier League.  
I have been the Jimmy Rooney Medalist for best on ground in a Premier league Grand Final.  
I have represented Victoria in Australia and overseas.

### Steve Starek



I have been doing pho-t o g r a p h y since 1999 when my son built a website for St Albans Saints Soc- cer Club and he wanted some photos

to go with the articles we wrote. So I went and bought a little digital camera and went to cover the St Albans Saints matches. Joined Goal Weekly in it’s first year (2005) and have been contribut-ing to the magazine ever since. Also a regualr contributor to the Croatian Her-ald and the CroExpress.

### Matt Galea



Growing up on the Eng-lish Premier League high-lights show, formerly of SBS, Mat- thew Galea has grown up on football. Unfortunat-ely, his talent

in the game never quite matched his pas-sion for it, so after taking the decision to drop the game to focus on his VCE stud-ies, Matt has welcomed the opportunity to return to the game and will play out the 2010 season at Essendon Royals, as they start the long trek back to the Victorian Premier League. An avid follower of the English Premier League, Matthew is a devoted Manchester United fan, known for knocking back the occasional night out because “the boys are playing in the morning”. Matthew has been writing for Goal Weekly since 2009 and is looking forward to embarking on his second sea-son with the publication!

### John Punshon



Inspired by Tony Duffy’s pictures in Athletics in Focus, I began shoot-ing sport in 1976. Week-ends for the next 20 years were spent on photogra-

phy – athletics, fun runs and from 1982, football, with the work published in vari-ous Australian and overseas newspapers and magazines. A detached retina and assorted other eye problems put an end to that. I very reluctantly retired from photography in 1996 and began compil-ing an archive of Victorian football sta-tistics (see www.ozfootball.net). The ac-quisition of an advanced digital camera (which effectively compensates for my less than perfect vision) and the emer-gence of Goal! Weekly in 2005 has given me a second chance to get back into the game ... and I’m loving it!

### John Dickens



A huge pas-sion for sport, an interest in writing and a keen desire to develop my alcohol consumption abilities pro-vided the key ingredients for a degree

in Sports Journalism from Staffordshire University, England.  
Currently in a gap year, I am taking advantage of the fantastic sporting and drinking opportunities Melbourne has to offer whilst still walking the sport jour-nalism path.  
Or maybe stumbling is more fitting..

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# Wee Hammy: pigeon-toed star of the sixties

HAMILTON McMeechan was one of Victoria and Australia's best players in the 1960s with seven Socceroo caps and numerous games for Victoria.

He was born in Scotland in 1941 and played football with Carlisle United and Exeter City in England before coming to Australia in 1963. A typical Scottish winger and inside-forward with superb close control, he signed with Slavia winning the Dockerty Cup in 1964. His skills brought him to the notice of Frank Burin who was in the process of revamping the Croatia team in 1965. Hammy's transfer fee of £1,200 (\$2,400) was a Victorian record at the time. He helped Croatia win everything in sight in 1968 including the State League and the Dockerty Cup. The next year he went to Western Suburbs in Sydney but was back with Hakoah and later Juventus in Victoria by 1974 and even had a spell in Japan with Yomiuri and in South Australia with West Adelaide.

He was a member of the Socceroo squad which embarked on Australia's first World Cup qualifying campaign in 1965. In that weird exercise he did not play in either of the qualifiers against North Korea but turned out against Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Malaysia twice. Those games were played after the World Cup qualifiers, in part to raise funds to meet the cost of the exercise. Since then Australia has learned to play its warm-up matches before the main event! Earlier in 1965 he had turned out for the Socceros and twice for Victoria against Moscow Torpedo which toured Australia that year. In 1967

he played for Australia against a Scotland team that included Alex Ferguson, now Sir Alex and manager of Manchester United. Hammy was injured in the game in Adelaide and hence missed the final match in Melbourne.

It was while he was at Prahran in 1964 that McMeechan took part in a charity match at Olympic Park against some of the superstars of the Victorian Football League including Ron Barrassi, Kevin Murray, Gordon Collis, Ted Whitten and Des Tudenham. Not a bunch of shrinking violets! The match had been stirred up by Jack Dyer's comments in his column in Truth after he had been to the Dockerty Cup final and claimed that 'soccer was a game for big girls.' But when it came to the game the Prahran boys were three-nil up at half-time and won the match eight-nil. Barrassi was injured in a legitimate tackle demolishing the notion that the round ball game was one for weaklings, while Hammy caused delight in the crowd and apoplexy in his opponent when Gordon Collis chased him towards the corner flag. The wee man backheeled the ball to a team-mate but kept running, pursued by Collis, who could not make out what had happened. The match raised a considerable sum for charity, but only temporarily overcame the prejudice against the world game.

Hammy continued to play and coach at various clubs and in 1983 turned out for a Victorian veterans' team which played the curtain raiser to the centenary match between Victoria and New South Wales at Olympic Park. Both sides wore old-fashioned strips and Hammy was resplendent with his centre parting in his hair and a huge moustache. I remember coming up against him in a veteran's match in the 1990s along with the late Frankie Loughran, Ted Smith, and Nick van Egmond, senior. He still had the characteristic pigeon-toed running style and all the touches accompanied by a continuous repartee between himself and Loughran, two of the funniest men you could ever meet on the playing field. Now retired he lives in Vermont, and was playing indoor soccer until a hip operation a couple of years ago. He helps coach a girls' team and still keeps his interest in all aspects of football. In 2010 he still talks as good a game as he played.

*My thanks to Ian Syson for his rediscovery of the 1964 game, the story of which appears in Meanjin, summer edition, 2009.*



Hamming it up. Hammy McMeechan for Victorian veterans celebrates the centenary of the first interstate game against New South Wales in 1983. Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.

Hammy McMeechan against Moscow Torpedo in 1965. Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.





# NTC – Nous, Talent, Class

THE National Training Centre (NTC) Victorian Premier League experiment got off to a flyer last week when the first team squad defeated South Melbourne 4-0 and the second team squad won 3-2.

I know that there is some angst among VPL clubs concerning this venture, mainly due to the fact that Mehmet Durakovic's first team squad does not play for points yet yellow and red cards and suspensions apply.

But let's step back for a moment from club positions of self-interest because all of us have a duty to the game to try and give these elite youngsters every possibility of realising their potential.

Sure, there are many outstanding young players who for various reasons are not involved in these two squads and have either chosen or been forced to develop outside established pathways but the youngsters who are fortunate enough to be involved really do have tremendous quality.

Both games were well worth watching, especially the under-21 clash involving Ian Greener's NTC group because it was a much more even contest.

This is the 'old' VIS group that has been competitive since its introduction to this level of competition. Greener's kids finished fifth in 2007, repeated the dose in 2008 and finished sixth last season.

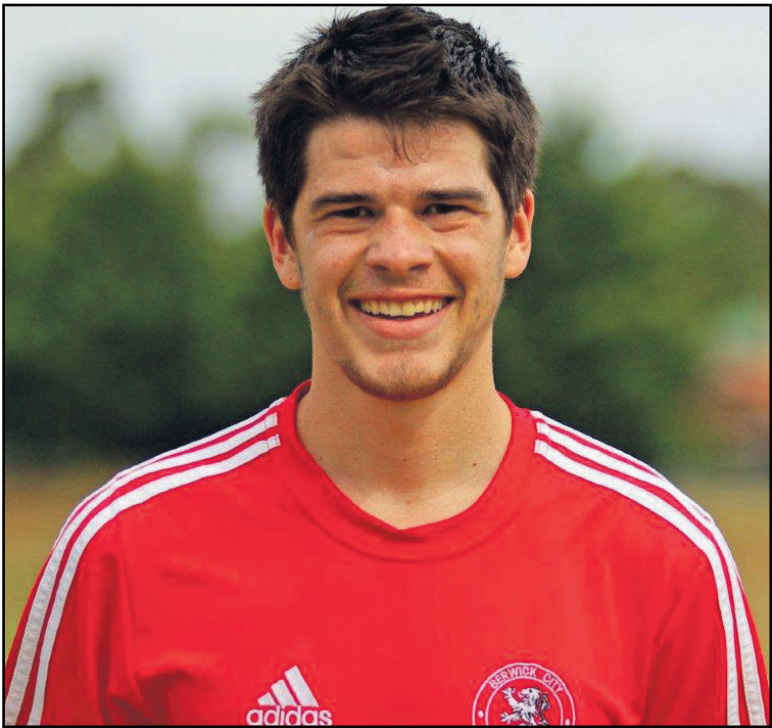
By the way, GW reported last week that Durakovic and Greener were searching for assistants. Greener at least found one, erstwhile snappy dresser and FFV coaching development manager Harry Bingham. Or should I call him 'Jose' as one wag jokingly suggested alluding to Bingham's decision to go for The Special One look on matchday?

But take nothing away from South Melbourne's youngsters because the club has some superb talent at its disposal and I guess it's holding onto these boys that will be the coaching staff's biggest challenge in the short term.

If you remain sceptical about the worth of the NTC's VPL inclusion and the quality of football on display please don't take my word for it. Get off your butt, get along to the games and make your own mind up.

**Bowen's magnificent seven**  
**ZANE Bowen's soccer academy is in career best form at the minute after news that seven academy members have been offered scholarships from two English league clubs.**

Bowen, Vid Horvart, Tony Calle and Oscar Gonzo were the coaching staff behind the successful UK tour of an academy side in January and early February



Michael Lind is back in the US trialling with AC St Louis.  
Photo: JOHN MAJKUT.

that played trial games against Torquay United, Birmingham City and Bristol City.

Torquay was so impressed with the academy youngsters that six of them have been offered scholarships to participate in the club's Paignton College course next August and are expected to return to Torquay for pre-season training beforehand.

The sextet comprises Nick Scerri, Sait Guler, Joshua Calle, Mark Blanco, Jarred Preston and Alex Prodanovic.

During one of the trial games, Joshua Bowen scored a hat-trick against Birmingham City. That match was watched by a Coventry scout and the Championship outfit offered the teenager a scholarship.

But before you think that everything is rosy for all of these youngsters it's worth considering a couple of issues.

First there's the small matter of gaining an international clearance for players under the age of 18.

The FIFA ruling that has been alluded to on a few occasions in this publication's 2009 sojourn still is in place. What isn't in place is the draconian blanket ban that for a while Football Federation Australia adopted with regard to implementing this rule.

I understand that international clearance applications are treated on a case-by-case basis now so let's wish those youngsters well. Fingers crossed that the

word 'scholarship' carries some clout along the lines of seeking a clearance for educational as opposed to football reasons.

The second issue concerns the precarious state of Torquay's league membership. The League Two club has been spluttering along all season and as we went to press had won just five home games and one away match. If the club goes down it raises the question of whether its revenue base can withstand the rigours of Blue Square Premier competition while financing what seems to be a sound development program.

**From Berwick to St Louis**  
**STATE Two South-East's Berwick City may have lost out to AC St Louis in the race to sign 21-year-old central midfielder Michael Lind.**

Lind flew back to his homeland last week after accepting an offer of a one-month trial with the Missouri outfit which is coached by Claude Anelka, older brother of Arsenal and France star Nicolas.

"Michael loved this club and we've left things open for him. If things don't work out back in the States then there's a place here for him because he's got a year's working visa," said Berwick senior coach Joe Carroll.

AC St Louis plays in the new United States Soccer Federation Division Two Professional League, a 12-team compe-



Has Berwick City won the race to sign Shane Tagliaferro?  
Photo: JOHN MAJKUT.

tition formed in January this year as a compromise between the feuding United Soccer Leagues (USL) and the North American Soccer League (NASL). The league features teams from the US, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Which is all well and good but where does that leave Berwick City as it embarks on its first ever State Two campaign?

"I'd love to sign another three or four players," said Carroll, "but I'm not going to tell you who they are."

Is that because other clubs will be alerted to their availability?

"No, it's because they're training with other clubs right now."

What we can tell you is that Carroll expects to sign Shane Tagliaferro from Langwarrin. The versatile 22-year-old is a former Green Gully, Frankston Pines and Cranbourne player.

Casey Comets had been chasing his signature and he was expected to tell Berwick's State Two rival of his decision late last week.

Carroll is believed to be looking to sign another defender, a midfielder and a striker.

"We want to go into this level of competition as organised as we can. We want players to know exactly what is expected of them and we want to go for broke in every single game," he said.

**Bambridge's famous five**  
**THE VPL refereeing panel has received an injection of five new faces courtesy of the Talented Officials Program now in its fourth year of operation.**

Shaun Evans, Alex Lord, Lucien Laverdure, Brenton Hayward and Alejandro Azcurra will officiate at the highest club level in Victoria this season.

FFV's referees development manager Chris Bambridge (one-time sparring partner of José Miguel González Martín del Campo – sorry Chris, couldn't resist) explained that the program is an integral part of the Victorian match officials development pathway and now we have proof that the pathway produces.

All five VPL newcomers have represented Victoria at national championships while Evans and Azcurra have officiated in the A-League this season.

"Alejandro is currently in the AFC Elite Talented Officials Program which will see him operating in Asia over the next two years as part of his further development," said Bambridge.

We wish them well, operating as they must in the sometime cauldron of VPL matchday.

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# KAT'S CORNER

With Peter Katholos

Australian international with 25 caps , Australian Player of the Year , winner of 4 NSL championships , 3 NSL Cups , 557 first grade games, 97 goals from 1976-1996 . Played for St George, Sydney Olympic, Apia, Marconi, Melita Eagles and Larissa (Greece). Rated as one of the best technically gifted players ever produced in Australia. Now involved with player development and player management. [www.technikfootball.com](http://www.technikfootball.com)

The NSW Super League begins this weekend, I'm ready to go and watch my old club Sydney Olympic do battle with Sutherland Sharks at Belmore Sports Ground.

There's many new faces at Olympic, with Nick Tsatalios among them making his debut for the club.

What a story this young lad Nick Tsatalios has to tell! From A-League stardom with Sydney FC and marking David Beckham in front of 80,000 people, to Newcastle Jets to Sydney Olympic .

How a career can turn if the coach snubs you. Nothing changed with the player, as he still is very quick and he is still a very discipline wing back, but if a coach does not give you game time and believe in you, the player's confidence soon falls and you start doubting yourself and everything is out of whack - your decision making, your weight of passing and your whole demeanour.

John Kosmina, what was the issue? You tried to destroy this young man's career as soon as you heard he had interest from clubs overseas. You

snubbed him, you didn't play him regularly and then he gets the chop from the National Youth team that played in Saudi Arabia. The clubs interested are wondering and asking why he is not playing? He must be out of form or not good enough. You've accomplish your goal, so are you happy now? Do you have a problem with Greeks? Get over it, they paid your wages in 1986-87 at Olympic, but they were all right back then!

You get the drift how a coach single headedly can destroy a player!

By the way, John Kosmina was a pro-

tested species. He can do no wrong and no journalist had the hike to ask what happened to this player - they just accepted that John Kosmina was right. No he wasn't!

Also, let me remind you all that this season, Vitezslav Lavicka , the new coach of Sydney FC with a similar squad to John Kosmina, finished first this season after all the home and away matches Please remind yourself that next time someone starts boasting about him.

Well, let me tell you all this, Nick Tsatalios is going to bounce back and

he is good enough to make it in the big time. He has speed, skill , can score goals, has great marking capabilities and discipline, and he is starting to believe in himself again. Also, I don't see the current left back at Sydney FC being better then Nick, so maybe Lavicka should have another look at him. Above all he is a great character and he deserves success as he works hard and is very humble.

All the best Nick for the new season, and go out there and prove them otherwise. Kat and many others that know football believe in you!



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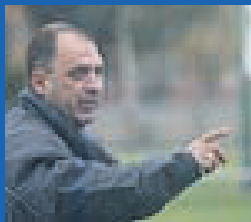
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(Former Aust International & Player of the Year)



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# THE KATSA

With George Katsamboukas

Welcome to Season 2010, and albeit one week late. As they say, better late than never. I'm back!

The Name Katsa's Korner has disappeared and the editor will shortly rename this Column to another name, as Peter Katholos laid claim to the name Kat's Corner many moons ago.

The editor justified this decision based on the number of International Games that Peter had played; I did try and put up a case that I had played 700 games, 685 of them in the Reserves, against the States finest hacks. Alas, to no avail.

What a big off season it has been...

Mark and Co from the House of Darebin packed up their belongings and moved to another more central location.

I am told that whilst this move was taking place, Barbara Streisand's great hit "Memories" was being belted out over the PA System.

The good folk from the FFV can now be found down leafy St Kilda Rd, I am yet to come up for a name for this location, so the House of Darebin will do for now.

The Club Powerbrokers didn't get much of a rest over the off season as they were busy courting pop stars to play for their team.

Some of the numbers that have been both offered and asked for are astronomical; the icing on the cake though being an 18 year old that has yet to play a Senior Game, asking one rather bemused Club Powerbroker for \$700 Flat per match.

Son, Australia is a Great Country, a land of opportunity, make your bones in a Senior Competition before you go asking for wages that will maintain your G Star Raw and BMW lifestyle.

Also, Clubs have a Salary cap that they don't abuse, and no one pays these amounts. Do they?

Over to the A-League we go, which is resembling more and more like a Swingers Party, with players transferring to another Club for either the Finals Series, or Asia Cup, then returning back to their original Clubs.

Nick Mrdja's short term transfer, to Melbourne Victory certainly ruffled a few feathers, and he repaid the faith shown in him from Ernie and Co by delivering a very well timed elbow on a Sydney defender, in the last match of the home and away season, earning him a two match suspension.

Victory is appealing this decision; hopefully for their sake they don't use the same scientific expert they used in the Muscat Appeal, otherwise there will be a very sad end.

Whilst we are on the topic of Ernie's Boys, I stumbled on their 2010 book send out to their Members.

There were players' profiles on their 2010 squad with Ernie then highlighting each of his player's strengths.

Seems that Ernie is very hot on the term "Great Personality", as he used this to describe most of his squad members.

For all aspiring young players wanting to get a call up to the Victory, polish up your personalities and maybe you are half way there.

Foxtel continued its coverage of the A-League with Andy Harper throwing in some very long words and various acronyms to describe certain matches.

The highlight over the summer was his description of one game where he found the first half "Salivating" Harps, my definition of something that is "Salivating" is a 750 ML Bottle of J Walker!

Preferably at a venue with plenty of fair maidens in attendance also.

This is Katsa - just as you have known him

And remember - Keep your friends close and your Club Powerbrokers closer.

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# BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric



**NORMALLY** I'm the first to get stuck into the FFV (well, sometimes Katsa gets there first) so it refreshing to report on some of their new initiatives for the 2010 VPL season in a positive manner.

The live internet streaming of a match of the week was well received on the opening weekend, as it should have been whilst featuring gun commentator Simon McCuskey. The VPL website also now features live score updates as well as general club news on Twitter and Facebook.

Names like Twitter and Facebook are at the forefront of the internet age. Sadly the internet seems to have done little to speed up the process of gaining international clearances for players. The time it takes to get one done has varied little since the days when homing pigeons were being utilised. Once again several clubs were left with players unable to take part in the season kick-off.

I will need to update the photo



Player registrations? Computer says "No".....

accompanying the column again pretty soon in case I start getting fanmail from the likes of Mr Baldy, Mr Stinky and whichever of Zig and Zag was the dodgy one.

My Slap Shot re-work will centre on a struggling A-League team from Queensland, who's owner intends

pulling the pin on the club at the end of the season. The coach tries to keep the club alive by starting what he hopes will become a self-fulfilling rumour that a Darwin consortium is interested in taking over the franchise. His efforts start with getting the story published on the

tribalfootball and Australian Four Four Two websites, as well as a concerted wikipedia campaign.

Victory was not to be in China, Joel Griffiths scoring the goal which brought them undone. It looked like AC/DC had played a few gigs on the pitch in Beijing as well, as it was not in the best shape. Neither were Melbourne, often made to look sluggish by their opponents who dominated the game. Melbourne were not without their chances though, it was just unfortunate they all fell to Nick Mrdja.

A look at the league ladder before the season began would have you thinking Betfair may have taken over the competition and made it a handicap event to make for a better punting proposition. Lots of teams suffering the dreaded minus three points. Wonder how many minus points Portsmouth would have received if they were under the FFV banner?

## PUMPKIN SEEDEATERS ARE BACK!

Yes, that's right guys, to the disgust and disappointment of many, WE'RE BACK!!

On this week's show of course, we preview the upcoming and highly anticipated (just ask Mark Rendell!) Victorian Premier League season, we get with the times and launch our 'A-League Evening News' program, we have our usual Mail Bag (we haven't received much mail lately!)-Media Watch segment, and we finish it off with none other than our favourite hooligan friend, Mr. Chelsea Head-hunter, who provides us with a couple of chants that are bound to offend the majority of listeners.

We hope that you are all well and that you all enjoy the show!!

<http://podcast.pumpkinseedeaters.com/PumpkinSeedEaters-2010Episode1a.mp3>



# KRNCEVIC'S CRUNCHLINES

With Eddie Krncevic

Australian soccer legend, Eddie Krncevic represented the Socceroos 35 times and scored 17 goals. He played professionally in Europe for Dinamo Zagreb (Croatia), MSV Duisberg (Germany), Mulhouse (France) and Anderlecht, FC Liege, Aalst and Charleroi in Belgium.

**GREETINGS** football fans and welcome to another dose of Krncevic's Crunchlines.

### GW keeps kicking goals

**FIRST** of all I would like to extend my congratulations to all the gang at Goal! Weekly for last week's bumper edition.

This mag has certainly come a long way since its inception and I hope our interstate cousins don't waste any time to get involved and help take this 'little engine that could' to the next level. It is a testimony to all involved to see it where it is today. Well done, and keep up the good work. Grass-roots football needs you.

### Red tape insanity

**I was surprised** to learn that quite a number of VPL players have not had their International Clearances processed in time for the kick-off.

At the time of going to press, I understand there was still approximately 30 players waiting for the green light to grace the stage this weekend just gone. I'm lead to believe that the Sunshine Georgies were waiting on at least 10 players to have their paperwork completed. One can only ask the question, why has this happened? Is it the clubs waiting until the last minute to present the paperwork? Or is there a glitch somewhere in

the administration system? Whatever it is, it needs to be investigated and sorted out promptly.

I've been told by some clubs that they submitted the necessary paperwork at least 2-3 weeks ago, and surely in this modern day of technology that is more than enough time for the FFA and the player's previous federation to process the correct paperwork. It is plainly obvious that somewhere along the line the system is failing us, and for 30 players to miss out on the start of the season is absolutely unacceptable by anyone's standards.

There's nothing worse for a player to have put in a solid pre-season only to be told on the eve of the season that an administration delay or error will force him to skip the start of the campaign. In my opinion there are no winners associated with this whole episode, which reeks of dire amateurism. In this instance the system has failed the clubs, players and the fans.

### Shocking Asia

**I managed** to watch the Melbourne Victory's opening AFC Champions League game against Beijing Guoan, and it was a shame to see them struggle.

I felt the scoreboard was kind to the Victorians, as it could have easily been more. Why is it that the Chinese looked

sharper, quicker and just so much more comfortable and controlled when in possession of the ball? To be fair to the Victory, they are obviously suffering from a horrendous run of injuries and suspensions at the moment, but the difference in quality and intensity was there for all to see. It is only the start of the campaign for Victory, and of course, there is still a long way to go, but hopefully they can recover in time from all their unforeseen circumstances, and hopefully for their sake, get things back on track. It would be such pity if the season that promised so much falls away at the very end.

Adelaide United on the other hand, put on a real backs-to-the-wall display. There was no denying their commitment and resilience showed up the reigning champions, Pohang Steelers. Whilst the result was a positive one, the gulf of quality between the two sides was once again extremely evident. It is plainly obvious that here in Australia we've still got a lot of work to do when it comes to being on par with our Asian counterparts. Like the rest of you, I'll be watching with great interest how the rest of the matches involving our two representatives unfold in due course.

### Kiwi Kudos

**A big round of kudos** must go out to the good folk from the Island of the Big White Cloud, for their sensational



Paul Ifill has been magnificent in helping the Phoenix revolution this year. PHOTO: MARK McGEADY

### showing of support exhibited for Wellington Phoenix.

Not long ago some of the Kiwi franchises that were participating in the NSL and A-League competitions were considered absolute basket-cases. I know that there were murmurs of discontent expressed in the Sydney press this week, questioning their involvement in the A-League, but let's face it, the sort of crowds the Phoenix are generating can only be good for the game on both sides of the pond. It has been well documented that crowds in the A-League have hit a

plateau this year, so we should embrace the wave of positiveness that is gripping New Zealand football at the moment.

If only some of our own clubs could deliver the same sorts of numbers through the turnstiles, instead of relying so heavily on Melbourne Victory's attendance figures the bump the average attendances up each season.

Well done to Ricky Herbert for such a marvellous achievement with his troops this year, and for breathing new life into the A-League.

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## EASTERN LIONS PRE-SEASON TOURNAMENT

The Annual Eastern Lions Pre-Season Tournament gets underway this weekend as State League clubs continue their preparations for the upcoming season. This is a Fair Play tournament. All players and spectators are expected to enter into the spirit of the event. Eastern Lions SC will have food and drink available at reasonable prices during the day. The bar will also be open. Games are 2 x 35 mins. Reserves games kick off an hour earlier on pitch 2.. (11.00 AM, 12.25 PM, 1.50 PM, 3.15 PM )

### FREE ENTRY FOR SPECTATORS

Eastern Lions S.C., Gardiners Reserve, Sixth Avenue, Burwood 3125  
Melway REF 60 J8

#### SATURDAY 6th MARCH

12.00 PM WAVERLEY WANDERERS v OLD SCOTCH  
1.25 PM SANDRINGHAM v MORWELL  
2.50 PM MORELAND v NUNAWADING  
4.15 PM EASTERN LIONS v SOUTHERN STARS

#### SATURDAY 13th MARCH

12.00 PM SOUTHERN STARS v WAVERLEY WANDERERS  
1.25 PM NUNAWADING v SANDRINGHAM  
2.50 PM MORELAND v MORWELL  
4.15 PM EASTERN LIONS v OLD SCOTCH

#### SATURDAY 20th MARCH

12.00 PM MORELAND v SANDRINGHAM  
1.25 PMS OUTHERN STARS v OLD SCOTCH  
2.50 PM NUNAWADING v MORWELL  
4.15 PM EASTERN LIONS v WAVERLEY WANDERERS

#### SATURDAY 27th MARCH

12.00 PM 4th PLACE GROUP 1 v 4th PLACE GROUP 2  
1.25 PM 3rd PLACE GROUP 1 v 3rd PLACE GROUP 2  
2.50 PM 2nd PLACE GROUP 1 v 2nd PLACE GROUP 2  
4.15 PM WINNER GROUP 1 v WINNER GROUP 2

## WAG OF THE WEEK



Martina Colombari Age: 33  
Insignificant Other: Former AC Milan star, Alessandro Costacurta.



## COUCH POTATO DEPT.



#### Wednesday 10 March

SBS ONE  
0630am - LIVE - Arsenal v Porto

SBS TWO  
8.30pm - DELAYED - Fiorentina v Bayern Munich  
10.00pm - Rpt - Arsenal v Porto

#### Thursday 11 March

SBS ONE  
6.30am - LIVE - Real Madrid v Lyon

SBS TWO  
8.30pm DELAYED - Manchester United v AC Milan

#### Sun 7th March

World Cup Magazine 2.30pm  
Europa League Highlights 3pm  
UCL Magazine 3.30pm  
Les Murray's Football Feature 4pm  
The World Game 5pm



#### Monday 1st March

1:30am Bundesliga Hannover vs Wolfsburg LIVE  
3:30am Bundesliga Bayern Munich vs Hamburg LIVE  
7am Ligue 1 PSG vs Marseille LIVE  
9am Serie A Napoli vs Roma  
10:45am Serie A Udinese vs Internazionale  
2:15pm Eredivisie Ajax vs FC Utrecht  
4pm Ligue 1 Lille vs Auxerre

#### Thursday 4th March

5am U21 International England vs Greece LIVE  
7am International Friendly England vs Egypt LIVE

#### Saturday 6th March

11:10pm FA Cup Qtr Final Portsmouth vs Birmingham LIVE

#### Sunday 7th March

2am SPL Rangers vs St Mirren LIVE  
4am FA Cup Qtr Final Fulham vs Tottenham LIVE  
6:40am Eredivisie NAC vs PSV LIVE  
8:45am Bundesliga Werder Bremen vs Stuttgart  
10:30am Bundesliga Borussia Dortmund vs Monchengladbach  
10:30pm Eredivisie Sparta Rotterdam vs Ajax LIVE

#### Monday 8th March

12:45am FA Cup Qtr Final Reading vs Aston Villa LIVE  
3am FA Cup Qtr Final Chelsea vs Stoke City LIVE  
5:15am Ligue 1 Marseille vs Lorient  
7am Ligue 1 Bordeaux vs Montpellier LIVE  
9am SPL Falkirk vs Celtic  
10:45am Dundee Utd vs Hearts  
2:15pm Serie A Sampdoria vs Lazio  
4pm Serie A Palermo vs Livorno



#### Monday 1st March

5:30 pm Football: Bundesliga (Rpt) Matchday 24 - Mainz V Werder Bremen  
7:30 pm Football: FA Classics G F.A. Cup 5th Round 1993/94 Wimbledon V Manchester United  
08:00 pm Football: Bundesliga Weekly Highlights Matchday 24  
10:00 pm World Football News  
11:00 pm The Magic Of The FA Cup - Newcastle United's Greatest Goals

#### Tuesday 2nd March

7:30 am Serie A Matchday 26 - Napoli V Roma

#### Wednesday 3rd March

7:30 am Bundesliga (Rpt) - Mainz V Werder Bremen  
5:00 pm The Serie A Highlights Show Matchday 26

#### Thursday 4th March

2:00 pm Football: Bundesliga Weekly Highlights (Rpt) Matchday 24  
5:00 pm Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 26 - Napoli V Roma

#### Saturday 6th March

4:15 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights (Rpt)  
5:15 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt)

#### Sunday 7th March

1:25 am LIVE: Football: Bundesliga Matchday 25 - Cologne V Bayern Munich



There have been further postponements over the weekend of March 6-8. This is due to six EPL teams being involved in FA Cup quarter-final matches over that weekend.

Sun Mar 7 Arsenal v Burnley 1.55 am (Fox 3)  
Sun Mar 7 West Ham v Bolton 1.55 am Viewers Choice  
Sun Mar 7 Wolves v Manchester United 4.25 am (Fox 3)  
Mon Mar 8 Everton v Hull 2.55 am (Fox 3)  
Tues Mar 9 Wigan v Liverpool 6.55 am (Fox 3)  
Wed Mar 10 Portsmouth v Birmingham 6.40 am (Fox 2)  
Wed Mar 10 Sunderland v Bolton 6.40 am (Fox 3)  
Thurs Mar 11 Burnley v Stoke 6.40 am (Fox 3)

#### Postponed

Portsmouth v Chelsea (now March 25)  
Blackburn v Birmingham (now March 25)  
Fulham v Stoke (new date TBC)  
Manchester City v Tottenham (new date TBC)  
Aston Villa v Sunderland (new date TBC)



**The Futbol Town Show**  
Every Monday 7pm

**The Victorian Football Show**  
Every Wednesday 8pm

**The Green Gully Football Show**  
Every Saturday 10.30am





# SMART MONEY STILL ON CHELS

This year's EPL has delivered one of the most unpredictable and exciting titles runs in many a year. GW's Matt Galea takes a club by club look at how your team has fared so far, and provides a verdict where based on current form will most likely finish on the table come May.

**Arsenal**  
**Form Guide: DLLWW:**  
Losses against Manchester United and Chelsea have confirmed that Arsenal still lack the necessary qualities of a true championship winning team. Although their 1-0 win against struggling Liverpool have seemingly reignited their fading hopes of Premier League glory, they will have to put together a consistent run of wins, without the staggering draws that have usually accompanied three wins in a row this season.  
**Grade: A-**  
**Prediction: 3rd**

**Aston Villa**  
**Form Guide: DWDDW:**  
Three draws in five games would normally be a poor return for a club chasing a top four spot, however, with three of those draws coming against Arsenal, Tottenham, and Manchester United, Villa can be happy with their performances, if not in the attacking third, then certainly in the defensive third. Their uncanny ability to keep out strong attacking opposition has served them well in this string of tough games, however, to secure the coveted fourth place and Champions League qualification, they will need to start making things happen at the other end of the pitch. With attacking talent like Milner, Young, Agbonlahor and Downing, there's no reason why they can't.  
**Grade: B+**  
**Prediction: 6th**

**Birmingham**  
**Form Guide: LDWLL**  
For Birmingham, this season has been one of undoubted improvement for a club who have gone a long way to removing the "Yo-Yo club" tag which they have been associated with for so long. Having gone undefeated for over two months, and currently sitting in eight, Birmingham can be relatively assured of a mid table finish this season. With the added funds made available to the club by owner, Carson Yeung, and the disciplined football manager Alex McLeish has his side playing, the future is certainly bright for the Blues.  
**Grade: A**  
**Prediction: 10th**

**Blackburn Rovers**  
**Form Guide: WDLWW**  
After a less than impressive start to the season, Blackburn have coped admirably with the loss of star striker Roque Santa Cruz and the moody fits of Benni McCarthy. Sam Allardyce has had little cash to work with, however the loan signing of Yildiray Basturk could be the catalyst for even better results. Currently sitting in 11th, and making the semi finals of the Carling Cup, Blackburn can be relatively happy with their season, and should finish well above the relegation zone, especially if they keep up their current form, which has seen them only lose once in their last five games.  
**Grade: B**  
**Prediction: 12th**

**Bolton Wanderers**  
**Form Guide: LDLDL:**  
Despite sacking Gary Megson and installing Owen Coyle in his place, little has changed for Bolton in their fight to retain their Premier League status. The loan signing of Jack Wilshire has bought some much needed talent into the side, however it remains to be seen whether or not his lack of experience will hinder his performances. Thankfully for Bolton and their fans, they have the time, and the players to turn this around. Whether or not Coyle can translate that into success, remains to be seen.  
**Grade: D**  
**Prediction: 17th**



Can Chelsea sustain their title challenge all the way to May? GW's Matt Galea seems to think so.

**Burnley**  
**Form Guide: LLWLL**  
Despite some great results at the start of the season and some spirited performances, Burnley still find themselves at the wrong end of the table. The loss of Coyle has seemingly hit the club hard, they have only won one game since his departure, and one must question the appointment of Brian Laws, a manager who has enjoyed limited success and who was deemed not good enough to manage Sheffield Wednesday. Unfortunately, it's hard to see better times coming Burnley's way, despite retaining the services of David Nugent, and relegation is looking more and more likely with each performance. Any hope of survival rests on their away form, which is nothing short of disastrous.  
**Grade: C**  
**Prediction: 19th**

**Chelsea**  
**Form Guide: WDWLW:**  
After their recent loss to Everton, Chelsea have seen their lead at the top cut to one point. Points lost at Hull and Everton could now prove costly, and it will be interesting to see how Chelsea react to the increased pressure. Chelsea undoubtedly have the squad and the talent to do it, they remain favorites to win the league, however they would make things much easier for themselves if they could improve their defending of aerial balls and set pieces, where they have been incredibly weak this season. However, with a list of relatively easy fixtures coming up, Manchester City aside, Chelsea will be confident of erasing the silly mistakes which could threaten to derail their title charge.  
**Grade: A**  
**Prediction: 1st**

**Everton**  
**Form Guide: WWLWW:**  
Despite shaky beginnings, David Moyes' side have run into some serious form and now find themselves back in the race for fourth spot. Star men Louis Saha and Tim Cahill have been inspirational for the Merseyside outfit, who have now only lost one game in eleven. Their tendency to draw games when they should win them will cost them however, with five of those eleven games resulting in draws. Despite this, their recent wins over Chelsea and United should see them string together some strong performances. They will most likely fall short of fourth, but they will push their contenders all the way.  
**Grade: B**  
**Prediction: 7th**

**Fulham**  
**Form Guide: LWDWW:**  
Another season of steady progress so far for Fulham. Roy Hodgson's side may not finish 7th again this season, but a respectable mid table position is nothing to knock back for a team who were so nearly relegated in 2008. Hodgson has built a decent football side capable of taking it to the best teams in the league. Unfortunately some inconsistent performances have stopped Fulham from reaching the same heights they did last season, however they will certainly be good enough to finish the season in the top half of the table for a second year running.  
**Grade: B+**  
**Prediction: 9th**

**Hull City**  
**Form Guide: DDWLL**  
Hull's terrible form at the end of last season has seemingly been transferred into this one. Although Phil Brown's side have pulled off some good performances, they have never really performed consistently well this season, and this could be their downfall at the end of the season. The loan signing of Zaki could bring some much needed firepower to a side whose various strikers have been more miss than hit. If he doesn't, then Hull's two year honeymoon in the Premier League could very well be coming to an end.  
**Grade: D**  
**Prediction: 18th**

**Liverpool**  
**Form Guide: DWWLD**  
A shadow of the side that pushed United so close last season, Liverpool are a club in a spot of trouble. Injuries to the crooked Fernando Torres, Aquillani, Glen Johnson, Yossi Benayoun and Steven Gerrard have obviously played their part, but so too have some particularly poor performances, particularly against Portsmouth, Wolves and Fulham. Although they are hardly in a great position, the imminent return of Torres and Benayoun could provide the added quality they so desperately need to make that coveted fourth place.  
**Grade: B**  
**Prediction: 4th**

**Manchester City**  
**Form Guide: WLWDD**  
With two games in hand and on level points with fourth placed Liverpool, City are in the best position of all the contenders to finally break into the top four. The money spent by City's affluent owners has seen an influx of new talent which has merged rather well with City's established players. Although they were initially criticized for sacking Mark Hughes, City's owners have

been vindicated by results achieved under Roberto Mancini, however, City's moment of truth will come in the coming weeks, when they play the likes of Chelsea and Tottenham in quick succession, followed by fierce rivals Manchester United and Arsenal in later weeks. How they navigate those games will most likely be the difference between 4th and 5th.  
**Grade: B+**  
**Prediction: 5th**

**Manchester United**  
**Form Guide: WWDLW:**  
After being thrashed by Fulham and beat by both Leeds, in the FA Cup, and Manchester City, in the first leg of the Carling Cup semi final, United have seemingly snapped into action. 16 goals in their last five league games, including seven from Wayne Rooney, has seen United relentlessly cut down Chelsea's lead at the top. However, with Nani facing a ban, and injuries keeping Ferdinand, Anderson, O'Shea, Hargreaves and now Giggs out of contention, the depth of United's squad will be stretched. The loss to Everton will hurt their chances, but if they can rediscover the form of the weeks prior, they will give themselves every chance.  
**Grade: A**  
**Prediction: 2nd**

**Portsmouth**  
**Form Guide: LLLDL:**  
If ever there was true relegation form, Portsmouth have found it. Afflicted by disastrous financial turmoil, constant take overs and an unsettled squad, it really isn't a surprise that they find themselves in the position they are in. The outlook is bleak for Pompey whose downward spiral from FA Cup Champions in 2008 to bottom placed relegation candidates looks unlikely to be stopped anytime soon. The lack of new blood in the January transfer market and rumors of bankruptcy seem certain to consign Pompey to relegation, and perhaps worse.  
**Grade: F**  
**Prediction: 20th**

**Stoke City**  
**Form Guide: DWDDW**  
Unbeaten in five games, Stoke look odds on to secure another season in the Premier League. Tony Pulis' brand of tight, restrictive and physical football has served his side well. The added flare of James Beattie, Tuncay and Fuller has turned Stoke into a combative Premier League outfit who should retain their Premier League status by a comfortable margin.  
**Grade: B**  
**Prediction: 13th**

**Sunderland**  
**Form Guide: LDDDL:**  
After a promising start to the season for the Black Cats, Steve Bruce's men have begun to stagnate. They have failed to win one game since their 1-0 defeat of Arsenal on the 21st of November 2009, going 15 games without a single win. Darren Bent has recently blamed this form on poor teamwork and communication, painting a bleak picture of Sunderland's dressing room harmony. It's hard to imagine such form continuing until the end of the season however, and with players like Bent, Jones, Richardson and now Benjani, things should change soon for Bruce's team.  
**Grade: C**  
**Prediction: 11th**

**Tottenham Hotspurs**  
**Form Guide: WDDLW:**  
Tottenham are another team who have started to fade after promising beginnings. An emphatic start to the season had the White Hart Lane believing that this could be the season they finally cracked the top four. Losses to Liverpool and Wolves, as well as stalemates against the likes of Hull, Villa and Everton have seemingly put massive dents in those hopes. A large reversal in fortunes will be needed to resurrect that belief and give Spurs any chance of finishing fourth.  
**Grade: B**  
**Prediction: 8th**

**West Ham United**  
**Form Guide: DLWWL:**  
A team who have never really hit top form this season at all, West Ham will be disappointed with their failure to really click this year. That said, they will take respite from the fact that they score more goals than any of the other relegation candidates. Their recent 2-0 win against Birmingham also demonstrated that they are much better than the standard they have set this year. With a very tough run of fixtures coming up, they will play United, Chelsea and Arsenal within the next month, things may get worse before they get better, however, Zola's refusal to compromise on good football should see them get the results they need against the teams surrounding them.  
**Grade: C+**  
**Prediction: 15th**

**Wigan Athletic**  
**Form Guide: LDDDL:**  
Wigan are one team who have seemed to go backwards more than forwards this season. They have been on the wrong ends of some absolute drubbings. They conceded ten against United over two games, nine against Tottenham in one and even went down 4-0 to struggling Portsmouth. Rodallega and N'Zogbia have been two bright lights in an otherwise poor season for Wigan. They will finish above the relegation zone, however, they may have their work cut out next season should they not make some solid improvement.  
**Grade: D**  
**Prediction: 14th**

**Wolverhampton Wanderers**  
**Form Guide: DDLWL:**  
Wolves have had their ups and downs this season, as is to be expected for any team coming up from the Championship. There have probably been more downs this season in all fairness, but Mick McCarthy will be relatively happy with the fact that Wolves are still outside of the relegation zone, albeit by one point. Wolves should steer clear of relegation this term, however that will depend on their ability to start recording much more positive results against the clubs around them, rather than relying on the occasional shock win.  
**Grade: D**  
**Prediction: 16th**



# CITY SHOCK NINE-MAN CHELSEA



**ENGLAND**  
**ALL** eyes were on John Terry and Wayne Bridge prior to Chelsea and Manchester City's clash on Saturday, but Bridge had the last laugh as City blew open the title race with a 4-2 victory over Carlo Ancelotti's side, who were reduced to nine men.

In the first meeting between the two players since news of Terry's alleged affair with Vanessa Perroncel - the mother of Bridge's son - had been revealed in the media, pre-match attention was focussed on whether Bridge would shake Terry's hand.

Sky Sports even re-jigged their programming so that advertisements would not appear during the teams' warm-ups in order to capture the pre-match tension, and, as if to follow a script, Bridge ducked the offer of a handshake from his former teammate to a chorus of boos from the Chelsea faithful.

As the action on the pitch took centre stage, Chelsea opened the scoring through Frank Lampard but the Blues failed to hold their lead as goalkeeper Henrique Hilario allowed efforts from Carlos Tevez and Craig Bellamy to slip through into the Chelsea net.

Chelsea then lost Juliano Belletti to a red card for a foul on Gareth Barry in the box and Tevez made it 3-1, firing home the spot kick.

Michael Ballack was next to go, the German midfielder receiving a second caution, and Bellamy added a fourth to compound further misery on the home side. Lampard netted his and his team's second with a penalty in stoppage time but it was too little too late as the Blues' four-point lead over Manchester United was whittled down to one.

Arsenal will have mixed emotions after they recorded a 3-1 win over Stoke City which puts them firmly in the title race, but lost youngster Aaron Ramsey to a shocking leg injury.

Ryan Shawcross was dismissed when he clashed heavily with Ramsey as the players challenged for a loose ball and Ramsey emerged with what appeared to be a broken leg, snapped at the shin.

Immediately after the tackle, it was evident that Ramsey had suffered a serious injury as both sets of players gathered around the injured midfielder with distraught expressions.

Stoke had taken an early lead in the match through Danny Pugh, but Nicklas Bendtner levelled and Cesc Fabregas scored a last-minute penalty, before Thomas Vermaelen wrapped the result up adding a third in injury-time.

Portsmouth put the anguish of administration behind them, defeating second-bottom Burnley 2-1 through Frederic Piquionne and Hassan Yebda, while Martin Paterson scored Burnley's consolation.

In other matches, Bolton recorded an important 1-0 victory over Wolverhampton Wolves to move out of the relegation zone courtesy of Zat Knight's goal, while Birmingham move to eighth on the table,



City's Tevez is back in Sir Alex's good books again after scoring a brace to blow the EPL title race wide open.

defeating Wigan by the same score line through a James McFadden penalty.



**SPAIN**  
**Real Madrid** notched up their sixth successive Primera Division win over Tenerife

with a 5-1 win.

Madrid's Gonzalo Higuain was in fine form as he netted the two openers for the Galacticos, and set up Kaka for the third after Ayoze Garcia had grabbed a goal back for Tenerife.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored Madrid's fourth, while substitute Raul added the fifth.

In Saturday's other match, Humberton Suazo scored a brace to hand Real Zaragoza only their second away win of the season and a 2-0 victory over Getafe.



**ITALY**  
**In Serie A action, Catania earned an important three**

**points thanks to a 4-0 demolition of Bari.**

The victory gives Catania breathing space between the bottom three sides in the league, with the side sitting one point clear of 18th placed Livorno.

Catania were ahead just four minutes in after Adrian Ricchiuti netted the Rossazzurri's first and Cristian Llama doubled the lead five minutes before the interval. Takayuki Morimoto and Jorge Martinez rounded off the crucial victory for the Serie A strugglers.



**FRANCE**  
**Montpellier recorded a 3-1 win over Rennes on Saturday to move**

**level with Ligue 1 leaders and reigning champions Bordeaux.**



Wayne Bridge and John Terry take a wide berth during the pre-match pleasantries.... just before the karma kicked in.

Bordeaux lead through a significantly superior goal difference (+22 versus +9) and have two matches in hand.

Last season Montpellier finished second in Ligue 2 and was promoted to the top tier and have been overachieving in the top tier this season.

Joris Marveaux netted a brace for Montpellier in the first half to send the team to the dizzy heights of second on the Ligue 1 table.

Jimmy Briand pulled a goal back for Rennes, but Souleymane Camara killed off any hopes of a Rennes revival, scoring Montpellier's third.

Rennes imploded in the later stages of the game as Abdou Mangane and Asamoah were sent off in ugly scene.

Seven-time Ligue 1 winners Lyon have continued their climb up the table and lie third with 49 points, closing the gap between themselves and Bordeaux to two points, after they defeated Nice 2-0.

Unbeaten in 2010, Lyon opened the scoring through Lisandro Lopez and doubled their tally when Onyekachi Apam scored an own goal.

Elsewhere, Johan Audel scored a magnificent volley to give Valenciennes a

1-0 victory over St Etienne, while Lorient defeated Sochaux through a Sigamary Diarra strike.

Toulouse won by the same score line against Lens, thanks to a second-half goal from Kevin Dupuis, while Moussa Maazou's strike was enough to give Monaco victory over Boulogne.

Bottom side Grenoble kept their faint hopes of survival alive after they defeated 14th placed Nancy 2-0 away.



**SCOTLAND**  
**Aberdeen extended their winless streak to eight matches when they lost to 10-man Hearts 1-0.**

Laryea Kingston was given his marching orders for a high tackle, but the visitors still managed defeat Aberdeen as Eggert Jonsson scored a sensational overhead kick to give Hearts all three points.

Dundee United leapfrogged Hibernian into third place on the table thanks to a double from Morgaro Gomis and a David Goodwillie strike that gave them a 3-0 win over bottom placed Falkirk.

## EPL

	Home					Away							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Chelsea	28	12	1	1	41	12	7	3	4	24	14	39	61
2 Man Utd	28	12	1	1	39	8	7	2	5	27	16	42	60
3 Arsenal	28	11	1	2	38	14	7	3	4	28	17	35	58
<hr/>													
4 Man City	27	9	4	0	30	14	4	6	4	22	21	17	49
5 Tottenham	27	8	2	3	28	8	5	5	4	20	18	22	46
6 Liverpool	27	9	2	2	31	11	4	4	6	12	16	16	45
7 Aston Villa	26	7	5	2	23	10	5	4	3	14	11	16	45
8 Birmingham	27	7	5	2	13	8	4	2	7	13	20	-2	40
9 Everton	26	7	5	2	23	17	3	3	6	15	20	1	38
10 Fulham	27	9	2	3	21	9	1	5	7	11	20	3	37
11 Stoke	27	6	4	4	20	17	2	6	5	7	15	-5	34
12 Blackburn	27	8	4	2	21	12	1	3	9	8	31	-14	34
13 West Ham	27	5	4	4	23	20	1	5	8	12	23	-8	27
14 Sunderland	26	5	5	2	19	14	1	3	10	13	30	-12	26
15 Bolton	27	4	5	5	18	23	2	3	8	12	26	-19	26
16 Wigan	27	3	5	5	11	18	3	2	9	15	35	-27	25
17 Wolves	27	4	3	7	10	19	2	3	8	11	26	-24	24
<hr/>													
18 Hull	27	5	5	3	18	20	0	4	10	7	34	-29	24
19 Burnley	27	6	4	3	18	14	0	1	13	10	43	-29	23
20 Portsmouth	27	3	2	8	16	20	2	2	10	7	25	-22	19
<hr/>													
Birmingham 1-0 Wigan						Bolton 1-0 Wolves							
Burnley 1-2 Portsmouth						Chelsea 2-4 Man City							
Stoke 1-3 Arsenal													

## SPL

	Home					Away								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Rangers	25	10	3	0	39	8	7	4	1	19	7	43	58	
2 Celtic	26	8	4	1	25	9	7	2	4	26	19	23	51	
3 Dundee Utd	27	6	3	4	17	15	6	2	2	23	20	5	45	
4 Hibernian	27	8	4	2	25	13	4	4	5	14	18	8	44	
5 Motherwell	27	7	4	3	18	14	3	7	3	15	16	3	41	
6 Hearts	27	7	3	3	14	11	3	4	7	12	18	-3	37	
7 Aberdeen	26	4	3	7	12	20	3	5	4	12	13	-9	29	
8 St Johnstone	24	4	3	4	19	17	3	4	6	19	26	-5	28	
9 Kilmarnock	27	4	5	5	19	21	2	3	8	3	14	-13	26	
10 St Mirren	26	3	7	4	12	16	2	1	9	12	20	-12	23	
11 Hamilton	26	2	4	6	7	13	3	3	8	11	24	-19	22	
12 Falkirk	26	2	4	6	12	19	2	4	8	10	24	-21	20	
Aberdeen 0-1 Hearts      Dundee Utd 3-0 Falkirk														
Hibernian 1-1 St Johnstone      Motherwell 1-0 Kilmarnock														
St Mirren 0-0 Hamilton														

## SERIE A

	Home					Away								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Inter Milan	25	10	3	0	27	11	6	4	2	22	9	29	55	
2 AC Milan	25	8	2	2	25	15	7	4	2	18	10	18	51	
3 Roma	25	11	0	2	25	10	4	5	3	18	17	16	50	
4 Juventus	25	6	3	4	21	17	6	2	4	19	16	7	41	
5 Napoli	25	6	6	0	15	7	4	4	5	17	20	5	40	
6 Palermo	25	9	4	0	22	9	2	3	7	13	22	4	40	
7 Sampdoria	25	7	5	0	21	7	4	2	7	11	24	1	40	
8 Cagliari	25	7	3	3	28	17	4	2	6	12	15	8	38	
9 Genoa	25	9	3	1	29	16	2	2	8	12	23	2	38	
10 Fiorentina	26	7	1	5	17	12	3	4	6	15	19	1	35	
11 Chievo	25	4	3	5	13	13	5	2	6	11	12	-1	32	
12 Bari	26	7	3	2	20	10	1	5	8	11	24	-3	32	
13 Parma	25	6	3	3	13	10	2	3	8	13	26	-10	30	
14 Bologna	25	5	3	5	17	18	2	4	6	9	15	-7	28	
15 Udinese	25	7	2	3	22	15	0	4	9	8	21	-6	27	
16 Catania	26	4	5	4	15	11	2	4	7	12	20	-4	27	
17 Lazio	26	3	5	5	12	13	2	6	5	9	15	-7	26	
18 Livorno	25	4	3	6	10	14	2	2	8	6	20	-18	23	
19 Atalanta	25	3	3	6	12	15	2	3	8	9	20	-14	21	
20 Siena	25	2	5	6	11	19	2	0	10	14	27	-21	17	
Catania 4-0 Bari														
Lazio 1-1 Fiorentina														

## LA LIGA

	Home										Away			
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS	
1 Barcelona	24	11	1	0	34	8	8	3	1	25	6	45	61	
2 Real Madrid	24	12	0	0	41	8	7	2	3	23	10	46	59	
3 Valencia	23	6	4	1	21	11	7	3	2	20	11	19	46	
4 Sevilla	23	7	3	2	20	12	6	0	5	16	13	11	42	
5 Deportivo	23	7	2	3	16	13	4	3	4	10	12	1	38	
6 Mallorca	23	10	0	1	26	6	1	4	7	10	21	9	37	
7 Ath Bilbao	23	7	1	3	18	14	4	2	6	14	16	2	36	
8 Getafe	24	7	2	3	18	12	3	0	9	13	20	-1	32	
9 Osasuna	23	4	4	3	11	9	4	2	6	11	14	-1	30	
10 Villarreal	23	7	3	2	23	13	1	2	8	12	24	-2	29	
11 Sport Gijon	23	5	4	3	12	8	2	3	6	15	17	-2	28	
12 Malaga	24	4	4	4	13	12	2	5	16	17	0	27		
13 Ati Madrid	23	5	3	3	0	16	2	3	7	13	20	-3	27	
14 Almeria	23	5	4	2	13	12	1	4	7	12	21	-8	26	
15 Espanyol	23	6	3	3	13	14	1	2	8	4	17	-14	26	
16 R Santander	23	3	6	0	20	4	4	4	14	15	11	-15	25	
17 R Zaragoza	24	4	3	4	13	12	3	8	16	35	-18	24		
18 Valladolid	23	2	6	4	17	22	1	5	9	18	14	-20	20	
19 Tenerife	24	5	3	5	3	21	0	2	9	7	28	-29	20	
20 Xerez	23	2	2	8	7	21	0	3	8	6	22	-30	11	
Barcelona 2-1 Malaga														
Getafe 0-2 Real Zaragoza														
Tenerife 1-5 Real Madrid														



# TOUGH WEEK ACROSS THE CONTINENT

**Sao Paulo coach and former defender Ricardo Gomes has been taken to hospital after sustaining a minor stroke just hours after his team's 2-0 loss to arch-rival Palmeiras.**

The Sao Paulo team doctor says Gomes is doing well and is expected to make a full recovery, but won't be back with the team for two weeks. Gomes was still in the team's changing room after Sao Paulo's defeat at the Palestra Italia stadium Sunday (last Monday AEDT) when he told doctors he wasn't feeling well. He complained of a headache and numbness in his arm. The former AS Monaco coach was later taken to hospital and briefly admitted to an intensive care unit. His Sao Paulo side also fell surprisingly in Copa Libertadores action mid-week to Manizales outfit Once Caldas of Colombia. Sao Paulo went ahead after 33 minutes when former Brazil goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni came forward to fire home a free-kick. Still on Brazil, double World Cup winner Ronaldo, who is now playing for Sao Paulo's Corinthians, said last Monday he would retire from professional football at the end of next year. The three-times world footballer of the year told a media conference he would continue to represent the Corinthians club afterwards, but only as an "ambassador". What a colourful career he has had, undoubtedly one of the greatest of all time. In Group Four Copa Libertadores action, Argentinian side Lanus also re-

covered from a goal down before thumping Bolivian outfit Blooming 4-1. In the other Group Four game, Peru's Universitario and Paraguayan outfit Libertad played out a goalless draw to stay level at the top with seven points. Full results are shown below. Argentina's Torneo de Clausura pulsated with Leandro Gonzalez's stoppage-time equalizer helped Estudiantes rescue a 1-1 draw away against Boca Juniors in the Argentine league on Friday. Also, Chacarita Juniors won 3-0 away against Arsenal de Sarandi with two goals from Diego Morales. Following the draw with Boca, Estudiantes moved to 10 points, one behind Velez Sarsfield at the top of the Clausura and level with defending champion Banfield, which won 3-0 at home against Argentinos Juniors on Wednesday. Martin Palermo scored from the penalty spot for Boca in the 25th minute after a handball in the box from Estudiantes defender Leandro Desabato. Gonzalez equalized a minute into stoppage time after breaking clear of the defense and hitting a shot into the roof of the net with the outside of his boot. Real Cartagena has taken much surprise in Colombia's Liga Postobon atop in first position in the standings with notable goalkeeper Juan Carlos Henao performing with stunning saves to keep the newly promoted side from the Caribbean coast in the lead with six points on 16 from their nearest rival Atletico Nacional and Independiente, both from

inland city Medellin. Two of Chile's three main clubs in Copa Libertadores, Colo-Colo and Universidad Catolica suffered heavy defeats away in Brazil to Cruzeiro in Belo Horizonte and Flamengo in Rio 2-0 with the second goal by Adriano and 4-1 respectively in mid-week action. On a much sadder note, last weekend's 8.5 magnitude earthquake that devastated great part of Chile left both their domestic league competition and their re-opening of it's national stadium in Santiago leaving it's double-header fixture on the 3rd of March with both Costa Rica and Korea DPR suspended due to its state of emergency meaning Melbourne Victory's Carlos Hernandez will remain home. Chilean star international Humberto Suazo lifted his jersey to reveal a T-shirt with the words 'Fuerza Chile' (Strength, Chile) after scoring twice in the first half in a 2-0 win against Getafe.

**COPA LIBERTADORES MID-WEEK RESULTS:**

**Group 2**

February 24, 2010  
Monterrey (MEX) 2 – 1 Nacional (PAR)  
Estadio Tecnológico, Monterrey  
Referee: Víctor Rivera (Peru)  
Santana Goal 61'  
Martínez Goal 69'  
Miranda Goal 68' (pen.)

February 25, 2010  
Once Caldas (COL) 2 – 1 São Paulo (BRA)  
Estadio Palogrande, Manizales

Attendance: 35,000  
Referee: Pablo Pozo (Chile)  
Uribe Goal 49'  
Moreno Goal 71'  
Goal 33'

**Group 3**

February 24, 2010  
Juan Aurich (PER) 2 – 0 Bolívar (BOL)  
Estadio Elías Aguirre, Chiclayo  
Attendance: 15,000  
Referee: Patricio Polic (Chile)  
Ciciliano Goal 11'  
Tejada Goal 37'

**Group 4**

February 25, 2010  
Blooming (BOL) 1 – 4 Lanús (ARG)  
Estadio Ramón "Tahuichi" Aguilera, Santa Cruz  
Attendance: 8,000  
Referee: Evandro Roman (Brazil)  
Vieira Goal 9' Blanco Goal 24'  
Salcedo Goal 39'  
Lagos Goal 60', 76'

February 25, 2010  
Universitario (PER) 0 – 0 Libertad (PAR)  
Estadio Monumental, Lima  
Attendance: 30,000  
Referee: Omar Ponce (Ecuador)

**Group 5**

February 23, 2010  
Internacional (BRA) 2 – 1 Emelec (ECU)  
Estádio José Pinheiro Borda (Beira-Rio), Porto Alegre  
Attendance: 39,304  
Referee: Diego Abal (Argentina)

Nei Goal 53'  
Alecsandro Goal 87'  
Quiroz Goal 49'

**Group 6**

February 23, 2010  
Morelia (MEX) 0 – 0 Nacional (URU)  
Estadio Morelos, Morelia  
Referee: Francisco Peñañuela (Colombia)

**Group 7**

February 23, 2010  
Deportivo Italia (VEN) 0 – 1 Vélez Sársfield (ARG)  
Estadio Olímpico UCV, Caracas  
Attendance: 6,000  
Referee: Samuel Harcedo (Ecuador)  
López Goal 54'

February 24, 2010  
Cruzeiro (BRA) 4 – 1 Colo-Colo (CHI)  
Estádio Governador Magalhães Pinto (Mineirão), Belo Horizonte  
Attendance: 32,927  
Referee: Óscar Ruiz (Colombia)  
Thiago Ribeiro Goal 7'  
Kléber Goal 62' (pen.), 72' (pen.)  
Pedro Ken Goal 69'  
Paredes Goal 37'

**Group 8**

February 24, 2010  
Flamengo (BRA) 2 – 0 Universidad Católica (CHI)  
Estádio Mário Filho (Maracanã), Rio de Janeiro  
Attendance: 29,107  
Referee: Carlos Amarilla (Paraguay)  
Leo Moura Goal 11'  
Adriano Goal 58'



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SKILLZ (6-12), TINY TOTS (3-5)





With Leroy Robinson

## Risky Business

By Leroy Robinson

**FOOTBALL is an entertainment business. I've heard it said time and time again. I was inclined to believe the cliché, giving the EPL the benefit of the doubt.**

But in a week where Portsmouth football club have become the first-ever EPL outfit to be put into administration my question is this: football is entertainment but if football is a business why aren't clubs being run like one and what can be done to end the EPL's debt culture?

Let's take a step back and shrink from football to personal finance. Imagine a clubs' debts in the same way as a mortgage on a house. At any given time your circumstances can change affecting your ability to pay the debts meaning your creditors (the bank) may leave you homeless in an effort to get a return on the loan.

While this rarely happens to most people (or most football clubs) the point is the same for both a club and an individual; the bank has to be confident your income has the ability to service and one day pay your debts. Pompey could not do this. They are not alone. Lower down the food chain Crystal Palace is in administration and even clubs like Leeds and Newcastle have financial problems. The news doesn't get any better. This week we learnt that EPL clubs have more debt than all the other European clubs combined; with total debt of £3.4b nearly the same as their total assets of £3.8bn.

Hardly businesslike you would say. That's assuming debt is always a bad thing - it isn't. Arsenal have debts tied to the building of their new stadium, the difference being this is a tangible asset plus the debt is being paid off ahead of schedule as the club keeps to a strict wage and transfer policy, something Pompey's owners did not.

### What Went Wrong With Can't Pay Pompey?

Quite simply Portsmouth had an owner in Alexandre "Sasha" Gaydamak - a French businessman - who incumbent with ambition allowed then manager Harry Redknapp to invest in players like Jermain Defoe, Lassana Diarra and Glen Johnson on borrowed money.

Gaydamak sold Portsmouth (and is rumoured to be owed £30million he invest-

ed on players) and though he stopped bankrolling transfers a while back the club continued to borrow and spend money it didn't have on new players - using projected income from gate receipts and TV money as collateral. It doesn't help that the list of owners this season after Gaydamak reads like a group of contestants on a Middle East game show: Sulaiman Al Fahim, Ali Al-Faraj and Balram Chainrai. Each promised stability yet none has addressed the repayment of existing debt.

Aside from impending relegation the problem was Pompey don't make enough to service their debts and pay the players wages, hence the problems this season with them not being paid on time. Add to that an unpaid tax bill and allegations they tried to siphon off income, therefore hoping to avoid paying tax, and you have as much financial sense and integrity as an arms dealer. As it stands they are quite simply an unattractive proposition for any potential buyer, administration being the only option they had to survive.

Administration involves an outside party coming into the club. Imagine them as a legally-binding financial adviser, able to strip assets and cut costs as they see fit whilst still maintaining the club as an ongoing concern for potential buyers. It's like taking all of Madonna's money and make-up and still trying to make her look pretty for her toyboy - good luck with that one.

The administrator for Portsmouth FC has a number of obstacles to overcome if he is to make the club attractive to investors:

- \*The debts won't go away.
- \*The 9 point deduction will see them relegated.
- \*If they would have been relegated anyway (irrespective of the 9 point deduction) they will start in the Championship on minus 10 points because the deduction had no bearing in their fate.
- \*Their stadium is one of the oldest in the whole of football, capacity no more than 20,000.
- \*They have sold most of their playing assets so all that is left is to cut costs and sell players very few top tier clubs want.
- \*Due to buying so many foreigners they have no talent coming through the youth system - a prolonged stay in the lower leagues beckons.

The only upside is the Premier League



Pompey fans take a look on the bright side of life...

will give Pompey 2 years of TV money in parachute payments to make the transition into the lower leagues more tolerable.

### How Can Other Clubs Learn?

Well it seems they haven't. Manchester United and Liverpool are in so much debt the owners have had to restructure debt or sell off outside assets to help with repayments. Big clubs such as these can get away with it because they are global brands making money from not only TV but from merchandising - having a stadium holding 45,000+ also helps. That doesn't mean they are not immune to a bank calling in their loans but it does mean as long as they service the debt and are frugal in the transfer market and on wages the clubs won't go the same way as Portsmouth.

The way other clubs can learn is to look at their cousins in foreign countries. In Germany Schalke 04 was threatened with having its Bundesliga licence withdrawn over alleged debts of 280million euro. After placating the DFB they were spared.

Can you imagine that happening in the EPL? Fat chance, but it should. There are clubs like Manchester City and Chelsea so stoked up with debt from their owner's pockets that all they need is for them to get bored and call in their loans. These clubs are no different than a body builder pumped up on steroids, it's unfair to the competition and penalises the minority

of well run clubs. The sad thing is the fans sometimes think the owners are philanthropists, pumping never to be seen again money into the club. So wrong! These are business people eventually looking for a return on their investment. Good luck to Chelsea and Man City in your quest to make a profit. Whilst I favour a Europe-wide policy to deal with debt it is in England where the debts are greatest. If the UCL had rules on debt that would be a start but in essence it's time the Premier League actually stuck its head from out of the sand and did something, rather than acting after the fact, or not acting, as was the case with Portsmouth.

### Solutions

The main solutions need to be focused on making sure this situation never arises again. For the sake of balance there are a few clubs in the EPL who are well run, only spending what they can afford. Whatever measures are implemented won't affect the Arsenal or Wolves of this world.

The idea that clubs should only spend what they earn is common sense. The trouble with capping spending by any club is that some clubs are so badly mismanaged that they may be beyond help. We have to be realistic. The debt issue is something that cannot be addressed in the short-term. Right now, though the only way to initiate financial restraint is for the EPL to introduce a salary cap

for 2010-11. The only thing the EPL can do is address each club individually by setting a salary cap for each club's total wages based on a percentile of turnover or some other suitable figure agreed by the number-crunchers at the EPL.

The cap would mean Manchester United would always have more salary cap room than Bolton Wanderers but each would have similar constraints on wages, just on a reduced scale. As each contract for a player is put through the premier league it shouldn't be hard to enforce this salary cap.

There have been no figures mooted for player's wages but I venture to suggest that EPL wages probably dwarf other countries the same way as their debts and assets do. Players won't want a cap but since when have players been interested in anything other than getting paid?

Most EPL clubs are at the mercy of institutions who, if concerned about the clubs ability to pay, will not hesitate to take action as in the Portsmouth case. Fortunately, it is often in the best interests of all parties for the club not to go into administration but this is a golden chance for the league to take action and announce it will propose a salary cap.

The other thing they can do is announce a long-term timetable geared towards punishing clubs with high debts accrued through means other than stadium building or youth development. Football may be a business but this one is showing the first signs of ailing - time for some bitter medicine.

## CREWE SEARCHES OZ TALENT

**VICTORIAN and South Australian football players will get their chance to showcase their talent with UK Professional Football Club and League Division 2 side, Crewe Alexandra F.C.**

Crewe Alexandra's official first team scout and academy coach, James Vince, will be coming to Victoria this Easter to search the state for talent, with the hope of taking some Victorian players over to Crewe's renowned development academy in the UK.

The Pro-Academy Training week will take place at the

Veneto Club Melbourne, 191 Bulleen Road, Bulleen between Tuesday April 6th and Friday April 9th 2010.

The Academy will give all those who attend the opportunity to experience what levels of fitness, skills and dedication are required to compete with UK Academy players in their respective age groups under the guidance of one of the UK's most productive Professional Academies.

Registration is open to boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 18 years and you can register or get more information by contacting Bino 0417 525 542.



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With Adam North

## The race for fourth continues to hot up

By Adam North

**THE UEFA Champions League is the most competitive, exciting and lucrative club competition in the whole world, and qualifying for it is an important achievement for any club in European football.**

This year, four teams from the English Premier League are currently engaging in a tooth and nail scrap for the fourth spot in the table, and with it a chance at qualifying for the Champions League. But which team will be a member of the top four come the end of the season?

Last week I argued against a proposal to introduce a knockout style playoff in the English Premier League to decide which team gets the fourth Champions League spot. As I stated last week, the playoff would be between those teams finishing from fourth down to seventh. It's interesting that the very season this proposal is discussed we have on our hands the most exciting race for fourth since four teams from the Premier League were allowed to qualify for the Champions League.

Aston Villa, Liverpool, Manchester City and Tottenham are all mounting a legitimate claim to a top four spot, and the gap between them couldn't be smaller. Just one point currently separates these four teams, and it looks like the race for the Champions League could go down to the last day of the season.

Before anyone asks about Everton, the team currently placed in eighth, and whether they have any kind of shot, the answer is no. Despite their great run of late, including a convincing win over the current league champions Manchester United, they are simply too far back with too few games to go to offer a challenge to the four teams above them.

And not only do I know that Everton cannot obtain a fourth spot finish, I also know exactly which team is going to finish in a Champions League qualifying position. At least I think I do. I have literally looked at every result from each of the four teams vying for fourth, and have guesstimated how their results will play out for the remainder of the season, thus telling me which team will finish above the other three.

Let's begin with Tottenham. It's the same old story for Spurs this season; they've promised much, as they showed home and away against Wigan, but have been inconsistent, best shown by dropping points to maybe the worst team in the league, Wolves. I'm afraid I cannot see Spurs getting close to finishing fourth, as the remainder of the season involves games against Arsenal, Manchester United and City, Chelsea and Everton. Although capable of picking up points against the big guns, it's also highly possible that they could drop points against the teams they should beat. No Champions League football for them next season.



Can Aston Villa finally bring Champions League football to Birmingham?

Now moving on to Manchester's second club, City, and their chances of finishing fourth. Much like Spurs, their season has been dogged by inconsistency, as week by week Roberto Mancini simply does not know how well, or how badly, his team are going to play. They still have to play Chelsea, Spurs, Arsenal, Villa, and their local rivals United, and I really cannot see them picking up enough points from those games, combined with however many points they can gain against teams like Fulham and Birmingham, to mount a serious challenge on fourth.

So fourth place this season will come down to probably the fourth and fifth best teams in the league, Liverpool and Aston Villa. The Reds have an advantage over the rest of the season, as they have more home games left than Villa, and also only

have to play only two members of the top eight, United and Chelsea, whereas Villa still have to play Chelsea, Everton and City. And yet, with that being said, I'm still making Villa my favourites to finish fourth.

Liverpool have eleven games left, and if they take the same amount of points from those eleven teams as they did earlier in the season, they will have a final points total of sixty-two. If we do the same for Villa, who have twelve games remaining, they will finish with a points total of sixty-nine, leaving them comfortably finishing in fourth place. And they probably deserve it as well, as over the course of the season they have played more exciting football to watch than Liverpool, and have done so with a backbone of young English talent throughout their team. Names like

Ashley Young, James Milner, Stewart Downing and Gabriel Agbonlahor could all be on their way to South Africa with England thanks to the faith put in them by Martin O'Neill, and because of their consistent high performance.

The only problem I foresee for Aston Villa over the remaining games of the season is simply burnout, which is exactly what happened to their Champions League challenge last season. Not only has a relatively small squad played a lot of games; they could still have more to come, as they are still going strong in the English FA Cup. Although that being said, Liverpool are still in the UEFA Europa League, which brings it's own problems in terms of travel and burnout, so perhaps these things will even up. Added to that Liverpool are also having a season plagued by injuries, and one more serious problem for Torres or Gerrard could spell the end of their challenge for fourth.

So there we have it I have officially predicted that Villa will win the race for fourth and with it a place in the Champions League qualifying, for the first time in the history.

Of course, this article is being written with my tongue firmly placed in my cheek, as I know that sport is completely unpredictable. Villa may run out of steam by the end, as they did last year, or Spurs may surprise everyone and finally live up to some of the expectation aimed their for what seems like forever, or of course Liverpool could finally prove that they are in fact a member of the 'big four', and easily move away from their competitors. My tip is still Aston Villa, but let's face it, nobody really knows for sure who will take the fourth spot. But whomever it is, we're in for a thrilling end to the season.

## IN OFF THE POST

Got something to say? Drop us a line and get it off your chest. Best letter wins a prize from our friends at Soccer Express.

mailbag@goalweekly.com



I think it's fair to say that for all the genuine footballing qualities that Carlos Ancelotti's Chelsea side hold, the ability to play expansive, free-flowing football is probably not among them. Indeed, Chelsea's position at the summit of the Premier League table can largely be ascribed to their ability to keep their shape and the discipline that successive managers have instilled in every player in a Chelsea shirt. Which makes it all the more amazing how little discipline these same players seem to show when it comes to their pants.

All the talk this week has been about Ashley Cole being exposed as the latest Blue to play away from home. But I couldn't help but feel more than a smidge of sympathy for Wayne Bridge, who announced this week that he's stepping down from the England side because (through no fault of his own) his position has become untenable in light of revelations about his ex-wife's affair with 'England's lion' (or should that be John Terry. Looking back, it's

just been an unlucky career all round for 'Bridgey'. From being one of the country's most promising young players, a succession of injuries and the emergence of Ashley Cole conspired to reduce our man to warming the bench for both the Chelsea and England teams year after year. And just to rub salt into the wounds, it seems that Bridgey, as we now know, wasn't even first choice with his wife.

Steve, Mooralbark

**Some credit is due for the impressive speed with which the new Melbourne Heart franchise have completely betrayed their stated intention to be a 'traditional club'. I understand that a fan's poll is largely to blame, but if they were really serious about creating an entity that reflects the historical legacy of the great game, perhaps giving it a slightly less ridiculous name than 'Melbourne Heart' may have been a good start. Now**

**don't get me wrong, as far as organ-based monikers go, it could have been a lot worse than 'Heart'. Melbourne Pancreas is one combination the marketing department mercifully avoided. Some sections of the support must be relieved that Melbourne Thyroid, Melbourne Diaphragm and Melbourne Gallbladder were given a similarly wide berth. However, as someone who was initially attracted to the possibility of becoming an avid supporter of the club, I can't help but wish that the result of the naming-process had yielded something slightly less wince-inducing.**

**And to be honest, the new entity's credentials as a traditional club are not helped any further by the new-fangled, M-H monogram they've chosen as the club's 'logo'. Call me old-fashioned but I'd have preferred the club to have adopted something more in line with the traditional crests that appear on the shirts of the great clubs of Eu-**

**rope and South America.**

**Although if I had to say one thing in favour of the design it's that it at least captures the 'organ' theme introduced in the club's name by seemingly depicting the lower half of the body of an extremely white man passing a rather large kidney stone.**

Ljubo, Sunshine

Loved last week's issue, and you guys did a great job of previewing each of the VPL sides this season. If the TAB offered odds on the lucrative VPL market, I'd put a hefty sum on the mighty Hellas boys (sorry, that's 'South Melbourne FC', we wouldn't want to offend any A-League fans by being too ethnic) for the title this year. Recchia, Keenan and Vasilevski are excellent signings and might be the injection of quality we needed to really challenge at the top. Either way, I hope we get another VPL in the bag before the new running track at BJS ruins yet another great South tradi-

tion- the spontaneous pitch invasion by Clarendon Corner.

Peter, Oakleigh

**Very saddened to hear the news of Portsmouth having gone in to administration this week, and hope it sets alarm bells ringing at any other Premiership club that thinks selling its soul to a cash-chucking foreign oligarch is the road to success. It's disgusting that something like this has been allowed to happen to a 130 year old football club and makes a mockery of the FA's fit and proper person test. Although, one positive to come out of this whole debacle is that our ringing ear-drums may well have endured their last bit of torture from the man Portsmouth fans affectionately call 'TTWTB'. And for those not so versed in Pompei matters, that's an acronym for 'That Twat With The Bell'!**

Jack, Frankston



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# SYDNEY FC

Monday 1st March 2010

PHOTO BY GEOFF JONES



***A-LEAGUE PREMIER'S PLATE WINNERS 2009/10***

Back row: Kofi Danning, Adam Casey, Chris Payne, Mark Bridge, Brendan Gan, Shannon Cole.

Middle row: Sebastian Ryall, Antony Golec, Clint Bolton, Matt Jurman, Ivan Necevski, Mitchell Prentice, Sung-Hwan Byun.

Front row: Ryhan Grant, Terry McFlynn, Simon Colosimo, John Aloisi, Steve Corica, Karol Kisel, Alex Brosque, Stuart Musialik. Absent: Stephan Keller





Australia has best the best player in the world at its disposal (Jamie Dwyer left) and despite all of the terrorism talk in India the Kookaburras should still pose a threat of their own,

# KOOKABURRAS TAKE ON THE WORLD

The Australian men’s hockey team will be looking to break a 24-year World Cup drought in New Delhi

By Tom Kneebone

Despite the additional worry of terror-ist threats against sportspeople in In-dia, the Aussies look a good chance to go all the way after winning the Cham-pions Trophy in Melbourne, 2009.

The Kookaburras’ only World Cup suc-cess came in 1986, when they defeated host nation England 2-1. Current Aus-tralian coach Ric Charlesworth was a key member of that winning side.

Every match will be shown on Fox Sports, all bar one of them live, which gives us a chance to watch our money go around.

There are 12 teams in the tournament, split into two groups of six. Each team play the other five in its pool, with the top two sides from each pool qualifying for the semi-finals.

**Pool A**

Germany, winners of the past two World Cups, looks good things to go through. The Germans have pretty much the same squad that made the Cham-pions Trophy final in Melbourne two months ago.

It’s a blend of exciting youth and solid experience. A World Cup hat trick is a genuine possibility. Germany is certainties to knock off Korea in game one on Mon-day night. Take Germany in a multi at 1.55 (centrebet)

**Pool B**

Australia has had the perfect preparation and is deserved favourites. They are a mobile team led by world player of the year Jamie Dwyer and exciting goal scorer Des Abbott.

They also have champion penalty corner flicker Luke Doerner who has the ability to score goals as well as setting them up with his incisive passing from defence. Australia is likely to play off in the final against Germany.

Take Australia to win the World Cup at 3.50 (sportingbet) straight out.



The Kookaburras have won a lot of trophies in their time; The one above was the Champions Trophy won in Holland. The Aussies boys then backed it up in Melbourne with an awesome defence of the title and now they are in India to win the big one.

BEST MULTI

Australia to defeat Indonesia (soccer)  
Germany to defeat Korea (hockey)  
Australia to win world cup (hockey)

@ 1.25 (centrebet)  
@ 1.55 (centrebet)  
@ 3.50 (sportingbet)

Dividend: 6.78



# Socceroos Ready for Asian Adventure



The Socceroos have a clear-cut chance to qualify for their second successive Asian Cup finals – avoid defeat against Indonesia!

By Tom Kneebone

A win or draw will be enough to get the Aussies through, something that didn't look so certain after A-League combinations drew and lost Australia's first two matches in this qualifying group. Two wins and a draw since have the Australians in second place in the group.

The Indonesians held the Socceroos to a 0-0 draw first time around, but their form since hasn't been good enough to keep them in with a chance of qualifying for the finals.

As a result, they're playing for pride alone, a factor that theoretically should work in Australia's favour. Socceroos coach Pim Verbeek has pulled a few surprises for this squad

**Kennedy is one of only four players joining the squad from outside the A-League**

with 32-year-old Daniel McBreen making a startling rise from the bench at North Queensland Fury to potential national honours in only two months. Youngsters Tommy Oar and Matthew Leckie have also been included but it would shock if any of that trio started on the pitch.

Verbeek is likely to start with Kennedy up front and his height should pose plenty of problems for the visitors. Kennedy is one of only four players joining the squad from outside the A-League. Mark Milligan, Jake North and Luke Wilkshire are the others. The

A-League contingent looks very sound defensively with Simon Colosimo, Andrew Durante and Jon McKain all experienced players.

It's hard to see Indonesia breaking down the Socceroos and with Kennedy up front and the mobile Jason Culina and Alex Brosque feeding off him, Australia should be able to qualify for the region's leading tournament.

Australia to win at 1.25 (centrebet) in a multi.

**Australia v Indonesia  
Suncorp Stadium Brisbane  
Wednesday, 8:00PM AEDT**

BEST ODDS	
Australia:	1.25 (centrebet)
Draw:	4.75 (centrebet)
Indonesia:	13.00 (centrebet)

## PUNTERS PANEL

The Punters Panel is a new segment introduced into Goal! Weekly designed to provide you with the best value odds on selected matches.

These matches will always take place during the week and while we do not take in the weekend action we will confidentially provide you with well thought out information on matches that offer a bit of value at the bookies.

Goal! Weekly will also be taking in other sports so don't be alarmed at the hockey on the next page after all the Punters Panel doesn't just stick to soccer.

Have a look at the multi bet we deemed to offer some decent value....it's on the next page.

If you have a tip send it through to [news@goalweekly.com](mailto:news@goalweekly.com)

Goal! Weekly will now bring you a wrap of the best odds being offered by all the major bookies! Now that we have done your leg work you can sit back and enjoy the action



# Canales signs for Real Madrid, but is it the right move?

By Kieran Pender

**This month Real Madrid have announced the signing of Spanish wonderkid Sergio Canales in a deal that will see him stay at current club Racing until the end of the season, before moving to the Spanish capital.**

However will moving to the cold bench of Real Madrid, behind the likes of Galacticos Ronaldo and Kaka really be beneficial to his development?

After only two years as a full professional, Sergio Canales Madrazo has burst to the fore of Spanish football, a majestic goal against Sevilla bringing him scores of international attention.

Interest from Manchester City, Chelsea and Arsenal saw the race for the attacking midfielder heat up, but Canales finally signed for Madrid, and will stay on loan at Racing Santander till at least the end of the season. But his signing for Madrid has rung alarm bells among those, including Barcelona legend Johan Cruyff, who know Madrid's tradition of delaying the progress of promising youngsters.

The extreme competition for team spots (Canales will be contesting the attacking midfield spots with Cristiano Ronaldo, Kaka, Guti, and Rafael van der Vaart) and the intense pressure of the demanding Madridistas has seen many youngsters fall at the Bernabeu. Even proven stars (Michael Owen, Wesley Sneijder etc) have found the pressure of Madrid too much.

Even more worrying for Canales is the number of youth stars who have seen their process stalled at Real. Juan Manuel

Mata is just one player who found his career in jeopardy at Madrid, and was eventually released by Los Blancos.

However several years later and now Mata is a Spanish international and key player for Valencia. Could Canales' career also stall at Madrid?

Fortunately for Canales the support of his father could save him from an ill fated move to the Spanish capital in the near future. Angel Canales told Madrid daily Marca that "Sergio needs playing time, to polish his defects and learn new things. That is very clear. The logical thing would be for him to stay with Racing next year."

While the current agreement only sees Canales stay at Racing until the 1st July, it is believed he could be sent back to Racing for another season if the Madrid coaches don't think he will be required.

The Racing Santander website have released a statement saying: "If Canales does not stay in the first team of Real Madrid, Sergio can only come to Racing, he can not play any other team."

While Madrid haven't confirmed this, Goal.com reports that Canales will join Madrid at the end of the season and will conduct pre-season training with the team before returning to Racing on August the 9th.

If Sergio Canales does stay at Racing for another season his move to Madrid could be more promising. Guti and Raul will be on their way out, opening up space in the team, and another year battling at Racing would do a world of wonder for his development.

While it has not yet been confirmed whether Sergio Canales will stay at Racing for another season or move straight to



Man in Demand: Canales promises to be another quality Spaniard to grace the world stage.

Madrid, it is clear that a move to Madrid could spell doom for the prospects of one of the brightest young stars in Spain. Another year at Racing however will help

his development, and help the possibility of a spot in the Madrid team when he eventually joins.

So for the hope of a nineteen year old

Spaniard, and world football, let's hope Madrid sees sense and let him stay Racing for another season.

## Yoogali SC pull out of Federation Cup

**Yoogali SC from Griffith, NSW, has been forced to withdraw from the Project Coordination Federation Cup at the eleventh hour.**

The interstate club had originally been drawn in Pool A of the competition, alongside 2009 finalists Canberra Olympic, Canberra City, who finished in the top four of the Premier League last season and Monaro Panthers.

Their place in the competition will go to ANU FC PPL (Premier Pathway League) who nominated for the tournament but missed out in a pre-competition ballot to State League One Woden Valley Rivals.

### Revised Federation Cup Draw

POOL A: Canberra Olympic, Monaro Panthers, Canberra City, ANU FC PPL

POOL B: Canberra FC, Tuggeranong United, Belconnen United, Weston Creek

POOL C: White Eagles, Goulburn Strikers, Cooma Tigers, Woden Valley Rivals

POOL D: Woden Valley, ANU FC, Narrabundah, ACTAS



## Bolton looks for strong finish

**Sydney FC goalkeeper Clint Bolton is aiming to finish his five year Sydney FC career the same way it started – by winning the Hyundai A-League title.**

"I have had five very good years at Sydney FC and have the utmost respect for the club," Bolton said.

"I have some very fond memories of my time here and I will be doing everything I can to help the club win the A-League title this season.

"Irrespective of what has happened around me I have always been 100% committed to the club. I wish to clarify that comments I made to the media last week were not intended to upset the club or our fans. I am very appreciative of the support they have given me since the day I joined Sydney FC.

"We want to win the title not just for the club and fans but to give Bimbi (Steve Corica) the perfect send off. We are all totally focused on doing that."

Sydney FC Vice Chairman Scott Barlow said Bolton has been an integral part of Sydney FC and the club wished him all the best for the next A-League season.

"Clint has been a great servant to Sydney FC since the inaugural A-League season. We wish him all the best with his national team duties as he pursues a spot at the World Cup," Barlow said.

"He has a number of big games to play for Sydney FC in the coming weeks. It is an exciting time for the club."

Bolton, currently on national team duties, will return to Sydney next Thursday with his fellow Sydney FC teammates and immediately turn his attention to the club's epic showdown against Melbourne Victory in the second leg of the Major Semi Final being held at the Sydney Football Stadium on Sunday 7 March.

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# Santo's Dolce Calcio Vita

**SANTO** Cilauro is a television and feature film producer, screenwriter, actor, author, comedian, cameraman, and probably one of the Socceroos' most famous and dedicated fans. Editor of online magazine, Half Time Heroes, **Con Stamocostas** caught up with football's funny man recently and talked all things Green and Gold.

**Half Time Heroes:** One my favourite moments at the last World Cup in Germany was reading about the meeting between you and Socceroos captain Mark Viduka after Australia's dramatic 2-2 draw with Croatia.

In Tony Wilson's book *Australia United* when Viduka meets you he keeps asking for Late Show tapes oblivious to you and others congratulating him for getting the Socceroos into the next round. You then promise to get him some copies of the Late Show. You say: "So that's the incentive, if they get past Italy, they'll have Late show tapes to watch?"

So everyone knows what happened in that match against Italy. My question is because of your Italian heritage, would the Socceroos have really got the tapes if they had beaten Italy?

Santo Cilauro: Forget about tapes- had the Socceroos beaten Italy, I'd personally have forced the Late Show team to reform, fly over and perform every sketch live for Mark and the boys. Despite my Italian blood, the veins pumped green and gold in 2006. And boy did they pump that afternoon in Kaiserslautern.

I'd dreamt about that match up since I was a kid. It really hurt to lose and just like the Iran qualifier in '97, I still haven't been able to watch a replay.

Sitting in the stadium at K-Town, seeing Lucas Neill sliding into (under?) Fabio Grosso was like watching a car crash in slow motion. Having said that, I think Italy had a great World Cup and ultimately deserved to win - I just wish I could have savoured it more. A very bittersweet moment.

**HTH:** Speaking of the big Dukes how much are we going to miss him in South Africa?

SC: You're assuming he won't be playing.... I spoke with him just before Christmas and he still hasn't ruled out the possibility. If he doesn't play, I think we'll miss his strength, that great ability to hustle and above all his presence.

He's a mighty leader - the guys love him and his experience in big games is invaluable.

**HTH:** What's your feeling about the Socceroos making it out of the group stage?

Should we be thinking like the patriarch Darryl Kerrigan from your film *The Castle* "tell em they're dreaming" or do we have a chance?

SC: Remember, he also said "Let's stick it up 'Em!".

I'm hopeful. And there's one thing for sure, if we do win the World Cup, it'll be goin' straight to the poolroom.

**HTH:** I was at the airport when the Socceroos arrived from Qatar, fresh from qualifying for the World Cup for a second time. At the air-



Main picture: Proof. Me wearing an Aussie top at the Italy game (2006). Top Inset: Dad watching Korean TV through the many mirrors surrounding our 'hotel' room (2002). Bottom Inset: Celebrating Italy's World Cup win with my family (1982).

**port there was more media than fans waiting to greet the team. Were you surprised at the muted reaction after qualification this time round?**

SC: I love the fact we qualified quietly. I've had too much pain in my time - two heart-stoppers with Uruguay, Iran ('nuff said), Argentina (one lousy goal), Israel, Scotland....the list goes on. I've seen the, all- those games took years off my life, made me prematurely grey. To tell you the truth, a tame nil-all draw in Doha was a breath of fresh air and, for me, the most satisfying of all the qualifiers. That's the way the big sides do it- in a way, I feel like we're sitting at the grown-ups' table.

**HTH:** Tell us a couple of World Cup memories from your younger days and how do they compare to following the Socceroos adventures in Germany?

SC: I'm the luckiest guy in the world - I've been blessed to go to the last 3 World Cups and I've loved every moment of each - I'll never forget that night in 2002 when my dad and I couldn't find any accommodation after the Spain v South Korea quarter final - we ended up top'n'tailing on a heart shaped bed in a Gwangju brothel (he still thinks it was just a quaint little motel with interesting mirrored ceilings and lots of free oil).

But when it comes to World Cup moments that really stick in my head, I'd have to go back to my very first memory of the tournament - Mexico 1970...I was 8. I remember clearly the night that July when I thought I heard someone talking in the kitchen. I walked in to see my dad hunched over the green speckled laminex table, back to me, in his blue and black checked dressing gown. I can still hear the scratchy sound of our yellow plastic radio. It was a big moment for me - the first time I ever heard my father swear. But he wasn't

angry. It was a bemused tirade. He was half-laughing, half-admiring. The sentence was long and flowing - only one word wasn't an Italian expletive - "Pele".

About 12 weeks later, a whole lot of uncles\* dragged me along to the Cinema Italia in Queens Pde Clifton Hill where we watched the film (not video!) of the Italy- West Germany semi-final. Despite the fact Italy won 4-3 a few months ago didn't stop most of the audience from feeling nervous before it started. I'm sure I remember some old guy sucking on a Peter Stuyvesant cigarette mumbling something about how tough the Germans would be to crack.

A few years later, the lady who ran the cinema decided to sell up and go back to Naples - she told me I could take any films and posters I wanted. I walked right past all the Fellini and Pasolini shelves and headed straight for the three reels with the 'Italia-Germania Semi Finale' stickers. They're still in my office right under the Leeds Utd No 9 shirt signed by Dooks.

*\* not real uncles - in Italian, anyone who's allowed to hit you with a belt is called 'uncle'*

**HTH:** What do you think of the A League and which team do you support?

SC: I have a strange love - hate relationship with the A-League. Whilst I love the fact that the game has taken off in a major way, I somehow think the standard isn't all that much better than when I watched state league football as a kid in the 70's.

In that sense I kind of resent all the hoopla that goes on around it. But before anyone starts accusing me of being a 'traitor to the cause', I still think it is an extraordinary feat that there's been such a growth despite the fact that all our best players reside overseas.

Imagine if any of the footy codes had to operate without their top 50 players!

Anyway, I'm so happy that the profile of Football has changed so much in my lifetime. I'm born and bred in Melbourne, so I guess I'm a Victory supporter- though.

In my old age I've lost the ability to be partisan and wish the Heart all the best.

**HTH:** Italian football has gone through some changes in the last few years. Tell us your thoughts on the Seria A like which team you follow and the chances of the Italian national team at the World Cup in South Africa?

SC: I used to follow Juve -but that was probably to do with the fact that Juventus was the only Italian team in Melbourne ( I played for their juniors down at Sumner Park- believe me my enthusiasm for the game is in inverse proportion to my ability to play it).

As well as that, I followed Collingwood in the Aussie Rules.

I did follow Italian football religiously in the 80's and 90's and thought it was by far the best standard in the world. Over the past decade, though, I've really dropped off. Things started changing when the three Dutchmen left AC Milan (Ruud Gullit, Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijckard. It all went downhill very quickly - too much money, no-one played with heart, players pretended to be loyal ( I still remember in 2000 when Gabriel Batistuta theatrically refused to celebrate a goal he scored for Roma against his old club Fiorentina - please, if he loved the Viola so much why didn't he just say no to the 70 billion lire and stay in Florence? The doping and betting scandals didn't help. Now all the matches look the same- every time I watch it feels like Groundhog day. That said, I was in awe of Juventus when they played

in Melbourne a couple of years ago - they were in Serie B yet their defence was unbelievable. I'd love to see them do well in South Africa but no-one has gone back-to-back in almost 50 years (mind you, Italy did achieve that in 34' and 38'). I just think that with Cannavaro and Buffon not at their peak, they might have a tough time of it.

**HTH:** Your favourite International footballer and why?

SC: Throw these names in a hat and pull out any single one - Fabregas, Messi, Villa, Tevez, Pirlo, Lampard, Iniesta, and Milito

**HTH:** Your favourite Australian footballer and why?

SC: Over the past 5 years I've loved watching Viduka, Culina Bresciano, Cahill, Kewell.... but right now I'm a big fan of Mark Schwarzer. If he plays like did last World Cup or even half as well as he played in England last season, we'll get through the group stage. I also love the other tall guy up the opposite end, Josh Kennedy - he can really cause havoc with those big early leaps. Both can really change the outcome of the game.

**HTH:** Do you think Australian television sporting coverage needs more Graham and the Colonel?

SC: I can't speak for Graham, but if you want the Colonel to make a comeback I can organize it easily - 15 years on, we won't need that grey wig.

**HTH:** What would they have made of the Socceroos recent performances?

SC: Despite qualifying they would not be happy. They'd lament the loss of that Frank Arok - inspired late 80's spirit. In four simple words, 'Verbeek Out, Yankos In'.





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## PREMIERSHIP

### ROUND 19 REVIEW

# Pointy end of the season

By Adam Hussein

## North Melbourne FC 9 vs. 2 Melbourne University FC

North Melbourne was in cruise control against a depleted and tame Melbourne University who started with talisman Duke Duva in goal. It wasn't the best way to start and it didn't take Colby Waterfield & Mirza Pedic to hit the back of the net. It was 5-0 to North Melbourne at half time, managed superbly well by Gary Liakoureas & Milton Sakkos. Milton donned the North Melbourne kit for this clash and scored a nominee for goal of the season with a Zico-esque overhead kick. Kui Mu & Billy Mihelakis contributed with solitary goals while Joseph U & Jamie Truong scored for Melbourne University. Hopefully the passionate Melbourne Uni goalkeeper Tom Wang makes a return for the struggling side that tried so hard to qualify for the V-League and have made a mess of season 09/10.



North Melbourne FC

## Doncaster FC 4 vs 6 FC Prahran

Inconsistent Prahran were solid against the cellar dweller oranges in this clash. Ahmed Muktar, Maxim Avram & Haider Noor combining to devastating effect. Haider scored 3 to take his tally to 47 for the season in the race for the golden boot. Doncaster has lifted the intensity of their game in recent weeks and they've reduced the amount of losses by more than 5 goals but they've struggled to come close to winning, Bill Giannakos has been a lone ranger up forward with little support. Ahmed Muktars range of passing and movement made life difficult for the orange side, Prahran are a dangerous side for anybody to play and with the Souvlaki Hut Cup around the corner teams will be keen to avoid the flamboyant side.

## Pascoe Vale 8 vs 5 Fitzroy FC

Pascoe Vale obliterated title pretenders Fitzroy FC in a season defining clash for both teams. Fitzroy were without mercurial James Blackburn, Manny Bulldog Karas, Adam of Argyle Hussein, General James Sibley & Luciano Bessa. Pascoe Vale welcomed back Juan Sastre and the result was a no brainer. Fitzroy had Mohammed Khaled, Matt Crockford & David Zahra debut and they all made small contributions. Flo Deffner made numerous saves, Ahmed Azzam scored & Leonardo Correa assisted flying the flag for Fitzroy. Ernie Super Simsek scored 4 incredible goals for Pascoe Vale complimented by Thomastown's Simon Lamanda, futsal tragics' Mesquita & Barbosa, Victorian state team trialists & representatives. They were awarded a controversial free kick 7-5 up late in the second half and scored the heartbreaking decider. Wounded Fitzroy are out of the title race, with Pascoe Vale playing North Melbourne this Sunday in a monumental clash.



Pascoe Vale FC

## FC Carlton 4 vs 0 Ashburton FC

Brave, courageous & determined Carlton destroyed Ashburton in a real exhibition of how futsal should & shouldn't be played. Carlton worked incredibly well as a team, have gelled quickly and found some consistency. Ashburton were a bunch of talented selfish individuals who never had the hunger to win yet alone score a goal. Carlton was missing Dianoosh Rasoulzadeh, a contender for goal keeper of the season and brought in Shayan Croti and still kept a clean sheet! Mus Eloor was a general at the back for Carlton and chipped in with a goal, as did Eren Ozdemir,

Brenno Scintillating Pollati & Hamid 'different shoes' Hassinakhoo. Emir Habibovic made a solid debut for Ashburton and may be a regular contributor in the coming rounds.

## FC Essendon 8 vs 8 Albert Park FC

The champs FC Essendon battled long time rivals Albert Park in a clash that wasn't as feisty as the last without a yellow card being issued! It was an old fashioned goal fest between the two sides with Alexander Stevanovic leading the front line for FC Essendon with a classy hat-trick. Ivan Zilic added to the tally with a double, Lubomir Erakovic, Ivan & Igor Stevanovic added to the total with solitary contributions for Essendon. Returning V-League legend John Verikakis scored a hat-trick for new side Albert Park, Matt Forte & Ignjat Filipovic added doubles to the total tally with Milos Nikaljevic also chipping in with a goal.

It was end to end stuff as both sides ditched defence, structure & formation. Both sides went for broke as fellow relegation battlers FC Geelong watched on anxiously. It was tit for tat and goal for goal right until the death. A point each puts all three sides in the dog-fight to avoid relegation playoffs.

## FC Geelong 8 vs 7 Metropolitan FC

Metropolitan FC under new management had destroyed every side in their path until playing the pussy cats. Geelong had hit a rich vein of form of late with some golden points earned in previous rounds. It was the perfect stage to test themselves against V-League powerhouse Metropolitan boasting Alia Redzepovic & crew. Geelong blasted Metro early with 4 unanswered goals. Jason Ng was a forlorn figure in between the sticks. He was replaced with Cem Bicer who held the fort during the Metropolitans resurgence and they went on to score three goals in a fight back. It was a pulsating clash with Husmir Ikanovic sent off for two yellow cards, and constant fouling infringements lead to three 5-foul penalty kicks awarded to Geelong, Ravel Tavares scoring the vital match winner, as the Pink Panther (FCG GK) & Geelong held on for a memorable 3 points in a season with plenty of twists and turns to come.

## FUTSAL OZ TRAIN ON SQUAD

Futsal Oz in conjunction with Victoria Futsal is launching Friday Night Academies for elite futsal players from U/11 to Open Mens. If you are interested contact us today on 1300 788 799 or info@futsaloz.com.au

## LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	P
1 FC Pascoe Vale FC	18	14	0	4	138	87	51	42
2 Nth Melbourne FC	18	13	1	4	125	72	53	40
3 Fitzroy FC	18	11	2	5	117	76	41	35
4 FC Carlton	18	10	4	4	77	57	20	34
5 FC Prahran	19	9	5	5	112	96	16	32
6 Ashburton FC	18	10	1	7	98	89	9	31
7 Metropolitan FC	18	8	2	8	106	85	21	26
8 FC Essendon	18	7	1	10	105	116	-11	22
9 Albert Park FC	19	7	1	11	97	119	-22	22
10 FC Geelong	19	6	3	10	64	112	-48	21
11 Melbourne Uni FC	18	2	1	15	55	119	-64	7
12 Doncaster FC	19	2	1	16	62	128	-66	7

## Rd 19 Results Wed Feb 24

6:30 Nth Melbourne FC v Melb Uni FC 9 - 2  
7:15 Doncaster FC v FC Prahran 4 - 6  
8:00 Pascoe Vale FC v Fitzroy FC 8 - 5  
8:45 FC Carlton v Ashburton FC 4 - 0  
9:30 FC Essendon v Albert Park FC 8 - 8  
10:15 FC Geelong v Metropolitan FC 8 - 7

## Catch up Round Clashes Sunday Feb 28

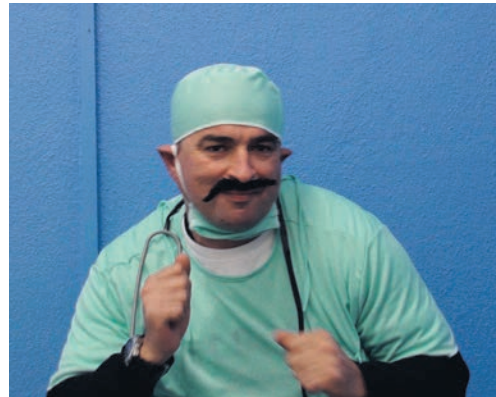
7:45 FC Essendon v Ashburton FC 5-4  
8:30 Fitzroy FC v Metropolitan FC 8-4  
9:15 Pascoe Vale FC v Nth Melbourne FC 4-4  
10:00 FC Carlton V Melb Uni FC

## Rd 20 Clashes Wed Mar 03

7:15 FC Geelong v Nth Melbourne FC  
8:00 FC Essendon v FC Carlton  
8:45 Fitzroy FC v Albert Park FC  
9:30 FC Prahran v Ashburton FC  
10:15 Pascoe Vale FC v Metropolitan FC  
TBA Melb Uni FC v Doncaster FC

## Top Goal Scorers

1. H.Noor FCP 47 goals
2. A.Redzepovic MFC 47 goals
3. A.Stevanovic FCE 44 goals
4. J.Blackburn FFC 41 goals
5. M.Avram FCP 31 goals
6. F.De Moreas NMFC 30 goals



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# LINO SATTIN



## Adelaide Blue Eagles



FULL NAME: Lino Donato Sattin  
BIRTHPLACE: Adelaide  
BIRTH DATE: 09.01.1975  
HEIGHT: 5 foot 10  
WEIGHT: 82kg  
MARRIED: No, because my GF won't let me propose...  
CAR: Nissan 200 SX  
NICKNAME: Bruce  
PREVIOUS CLUBS: None  
REPRESENTATIVE: State team  
HONOURS: Won 5 championships, Best and Fairest,  
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: Maldini  
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER: Maldini  
FAVOURITE HAL PLAYER: Maradona  
FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO: John Warren  
FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO: Harry Kewell  
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: Played against Xavi year 2000  
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: Italy winning the World Cup  
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: Scored from half way  
EARLIEST FOOTBALL MEMORY: Italy 1982  
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: Too many too mention  
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: See below  
WORST INJURY: Broken leg  
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: Damien Mori  
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: Hindmarsh  
SUPERSTITIONS: None  
TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL: Fruit  
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: Tackling  
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: Shooting  
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: Napoli  
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS: Golf  
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON: Tiger  
FAVOURITE FOODS: Pasta, steak, mash potato  
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Al Pacino  
HOBBIES: Collecting coffee machines  
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Malola Island, Fiji  
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: Any pub  
IDEAL DATE: Getting a free meal  
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: Biggest Loser  
FAVOURITE MUSIC: AC/DC  
FAVOURITE FILM: Back to the Future  
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: Napoli  
FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: That I was going to play for Campbelltown  
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: My Dad  
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: Pre-season  
FOOTBALL AMBITION: Play as long as I can, which isn't much longer  
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? : Maradona  
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S HAL: Sydney FC

PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER



# FAVOURITES SURVIVE EARLY SCARE

By Mike Salter

Pre-season favourites Bonnyrigg White Eagles went a goal and a man down early in the piece against last season's easybeats the South Coast Wolves, but pulled themselves together to win 2-1 in the end. Details of the game can be found below.

In Saturday's other fixture, last season's finalists Marconi began with a 1-0 win over the West Sydney Berries, Alex Canak settling matters with a goal just before half-time. A stormy Sunday then produced plenty of goals and several red cards, as the NSWPL got off to a dramatic start.

The always tense Bankstown-Manly encounter was scoreless for an hour, but following a Manly dismissal on 63 minutes, the Macedonian-backed club took the lead. A resurgent Manly were level within six minutes, however, and although Bankstown went back in front ten minutes from the close, Manly secured a second equaliser only a minute from time.

The Blacktown City Demons were another side to finish the first round with ten men, but a first-half goal was enough to see off the challenge of the APIA Tigers.

Defending champions Sutherland tasted a first-up loss at the hands of Sydney Olympic, who prevailed through two second-half goals at Belmore. Sydney United, last season's premiers, made a statement of intent by thrashing competition new boys Rockdale City 4-1 at Edensor Park. Rockdale were already 3-1 down when they were reduced to ten shortly after half-time, and United slotted in a fourth in injury time.

## Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2-1 South Coast Wolves

The Bonnyrigg White Eagles, everyone's choice for the title this season, began their campaign with a hard-fought 2-1 win over the South Coast Wolves



Action from Marconi against West Sydney Berries.

(formerly Wollongong FC).

Although the Wolves had the first chance of a pulsating match, Jason Tri-firo almost connecting with Andrew Paine's dangerous cross, it was Bonnyrigg who held the whip hand in the opening exchanges. The new-look forward partnership of Brad Boardman and Daniel Severino looked menacing, with the former teeing up the latter for a shot on 10 minutes. Soon afterwards, Boardman himself had a good chance, only to be denied by a smart save from Wolves keeper Brody Crane.

The game looked to have turned in the 20th minutes. After the dangerous Paine rounded Bonnyrigg keeper Phil Zabaks, defender Paul Cotte was found guilty of a last-man foul within the area. The Bonnyrigg defender was dismissed, and

Paine himself slotted home the penalty.

The momentum of the home side was not to be gainsaid, however. The powerful Vuko Tomasevic moved into the centre of defence to replace Cotte, Severino slotting into midfield, and Brian Brown's men hit back twice before the interval. Jamie McMaster's free kick was headed into his own net by the Wolves' unfortunate Lisandro Berbis on 35 minutes; Wolves heads went down, and it was no surprise when Bonnyrigg went into the lead a few minutes later, through their new dead-ball star.

The Eagles were awarded a foul on the right, 25 yards from goal, and up stepped Daniel Severino. One of the maestro's trademark free kicks whistled in at the far post to give the Eagles a lead which they never relinquished.

Just after the hour, a Wolves free kick was headed in by Berbis, but the linesman's flag thwarted the visitors. Although the Wolves were throwing men forward in search of an equaliser, it was Severino's deadly left foot which looked the most likely to add to the score. The former Bankstown man went close with another free kick on 68 minutes, while his corner kick a few minutes later was almost headed in by defender Graham Forbes.

With the dismissal of substitute Mark Picciolini eight minutes from the close, the fight went out of the visitors, and Bonnyrigg finished the stronger side. A heartening first outing for the NSWPL's "dream team", and a heartbreaking one for last season's wooden spoon recipi-ents.



### LADDER

	P	W	D	L	For	Ag	GD	Pts
1 Sydney United	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	3
2 Sydney Olympic	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
3 Bonnyrigg WEagles	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
4 Blacktown City FC	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
5 Marconi Stallions	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
6 Bankstown City	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
7 Manly United FC	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
8 South Coast Wolves	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
9 APIA Leich Tigers	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
10 West Syd Berries	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
11 Sutherland Sharks	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
12 Rockdale City S	1	0	0	1	1	4	-3	0

### Results

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE: ROUND ONE: FIRST GRADE: Sydney Olympic 2 (Matthew Mayora 66m Chris Triantis 74m) Sutherland Sharks 0, Blacktown City FC 1 (Luke Roodenburg 25m) APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0, Bankstown City Lions 2 (Robert Mileski 68m Hussein Salameh 80m) Manly United FC 2 (Justin Hayward 74m Keith Shevlin 89m), Sydney United FC 4 (Mitchell Thompson 7m Elsid Barkhousir 30/38/93m) Rockdale City Suns 1 (Pece Apolevski 19m), Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 (Own goal 33m Daniel Severino 40m) South Coast Wolves 1 (Andrew Paine 22m), Marconi Stallions 1 (Alexander Canak 44m) West Sydney Berries 0.

GRADE 20: Sydney Olympic 1 Sutherland Sharks 2, Blacktown City FC 3 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 1, Bankstown City Lions 1 Manly United FC 2, Sydney United FC 2 Rockdale City Suns 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 South Coast Wolves 1, Marconi Stallions 2 West Sydney Berries 3.

GRADE 18: Sydney Olympic 0 Sutherland Sharks 1, Blacktown City FC 1 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sydney United FC 2 Rockdale City Suns 1.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND ONE: GRADE 13: Project 22 0 Sydney Olympic 4. GRADE 14: Project 22 1 Sydney Olympic 3. GRADE 15: Project 22 1 Sydney Olympic 5.

METROPOLITAN REPRESENTATIVE LEAGUE: ROUND ONE: GRADE 11: Gladesville Hornsby 3 Ku-ring-gai 0, Manly Warringah 2 Eastern Suburbs 3, Blacktown 0 Central Coast 1, Illawarra 0 Sutherland 3, Bankstown 1 St George 3, Macarthur 5 Southern Districts 0, Granville 2 Nepean 0, Southern Branch 0 Canterbury 2. GRADE 12: Gladesville Hornsby 3 Ku-ring-gai 1, Manly Warringah 2 Eastern Suburbs 2, Blacktown 1 Central Coast 1, Illawarra 0 Sutherland 5, Bankstown 3 St George 1, Macarthur 3 Southern Districts 0, Granville 1 Nepean 3, Southern Branch 1 Canterbury 1.

## Tasmania

goalweekly.com

# South Hobart reach Summer Cup Final

By Walter Pless

**SOUTH Hobart qualified for the Premier League section of southern Tasmania's Summer Cup final from Group A when they beat New Town Eagles 1-0 at South Hobart on Saturday.**

Eagles produced a brave performance and only a last-minute goal by Jonathon Lo settled the issue.

South had nearly all the possession and sprayed passes over every square centimetre of the pitch, but they could not score.

They went close in the 12th minute when a deep cross from Greg Downes was headed against the crossbar by Liam Scott. The ball rebounded to Kostas Kanakaris, who shot into the side-netting.

Most of South's other shots were straight at goalkeeper Craig Minty, who, nevertheless, had to make one superb save when he turned Scott's shot over the bar 11 minutes from the end.

Two minutes later, Bart Beecroft lifted a half-volley over the Eagles' bar as South



Clarence United's Luke Huigsloot (left) tackles Taroona's Duncan Carey

kept up the pressure without reward.

Adam McKeown worked his socks off for Eagles in a lone role up front. At times he was surrounded by three defenders, but he stuck to the task and was probably Eagles' best player.

Shane Kent was solid at sweeper, while

his fellow defenders fought tenaciously against a team that stretched them this way and that without being able to get in an effective strike at goal.

Steve Loudon was ferocious in the tackle and often disrupted South's attacks before they became too menacing.

Eagles introduced Chris Jones six minutes after the interval and it took him only four minutes to get booked.

His impact was mainly physical and he was never able to gain possession and make things happen.

When South brought on Gary Upton, the sparks soon flew between the pair.

Upton stabilised the South Hobart ship, however, and won every aerial duel and actually found team-mates with his passes from midfield.

Too often, before he came on, South's midfielders squandered possession by playing bad passes.

Eagles, on the other hand, had their backs to the wall and relied on sporadic counter-attacks that usually came to nothing.

They had only one genuine chance, but Michael Anderson was off target.

With seconds remaining and South assured of a place in the final, regardless of the outcome of the penalty shoot-out had the game ended in a draw, Eagles cracked and allowed their opponents to

collect all three points.

A long ball forward by Scott was collected by Kanakaris, who played a short pass inside to Lo, who hammered it home from close range.

In Group B on Saturday, Clarence were comfortable winners over Taroona, who finished the tournament without scoring a goal and losing all three games.

Clarence wore black armbands in memory of Jack Huigsloot, the grandfather of Luke Huigsloot, who passed away during the week.

Ben Hamlett fired Clarence ahead in the 10th minute with a long-range effort from the right.

Sam McIntyre made it 2-0 seven minutes into the second half when he turned home Alex Nandan's precise left-wing cross.

Nandan added the third direct from a corner from the right midway through the half.

Taroona had a couple of half-chances before the end, but poor finishing yet again cost them dearly.

With seven minutes remaining, for example, Hugo Luttmner put Marc Gates away on the right and, when his shot was partially blocked by the Clarence keeper, the ball fell to Garry Hamilton, who missed in front of an empty net.





VPL Standings Round 1



VPL Results



	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Sunshine Georgies	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Richmond	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Dandenong Thunder	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Bentleigh Greens	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
South Melbourne	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Altona Magic	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Oakleigh Cannons	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Hume City	1	1	0	0	2	1	0
Green Gully Cavaliers	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Northcote City	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Heidelberg Utd	1	0	0	1	2	3	-3
Melbourne Knights	1	0	0	1	1	2	-3

Oakleigh Cannons 1  
Bentleigh Greens 1,  
Green Gully Cavaliers  
1 Hume City 2, Dandenong  
Thunder 2 (J Di Iorio S Rexhepi) Melbourne  
Knights 1, Altona Magic  
1 South Melbourne 1 (F De Moraes), Richmond  
2 (D Visevic D Tsiaras)  
Northcote City 1 (T Rixon), Sunshine Georgie 3  
Heidelberg Utd 2.

Mens Premier League  
Under 21s: Oakleigh Cannons 2 Bentleigh Greens  
1, Green Gully Cavaliers 0  
Hume City 2, Dandenong  
Thunder 3 Melbourne  
Knights 1, Richmond 1  
Northcote City 4,



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**RICHMOND EAGLES**



**2**

**NORTHCOTE CITY**



**1**

Richmond: S.Gal, A.Viola, E.Karahan, S.Piorkowski, D.Tsiaras, A.Tabor (E.Batsis 81'), M.Lujic (T.Uskok 68'), D.Visevic, M.Catalano (P.Sawan 88'), L.Ryan, T.Milardovic.

Scorers: Visevic 24' Tsiaras 66'  
Yellow Cards: Visevic 35' Karahan 45'  
Red Cards: None

Northcote City: C.Theodoridis-Petropoulos, H.D'Agostino, G.Papadopoulos, A.Chiappetta, B.Norton, N.Curtis, M.Rosano (H.Kinigopoulos 66'), J.Voulgaris, N.Tzoulis, T.Rixon, A.Turer (J.Theofilopoulos 70').

Scorer: Rixon 77'  
Yellow Cards: Chiappetta 23' Papadopoulos 33' Rixon 35'  
Red Cards: None

Man of the Match: D.Visevic (Richmond)

Venue: Kevin Bartlett Reserve  
Crowd: 500



The Richmond Eagles get off to a winning start much to the disdain of Northcote City. Inset: Northcote scores through Trent Rixon. PHOTOS: PETER PSARROS

# Fortune smiles on Eagles

## Northcote City shows character to mix in the big time

By Mark Boric

**RICHMOND was the venue for Northcote City's return to the VPL after a nineteen year absence.**

The home side fielded new signings Stjepan Gal, Liam Ryan, Stefan Piorkowski and Alex Tabor, with fellow new additions to the squad Antun Kovacic, Jesse Krncevic, David Scullion and Davey van't Schip forced to sit out pending the arrival of international clearances. The pitch at Kevin Bartlett

Reserve was in good condition, with a sunny afternoon not too warm to tax the players excessively.

Having gained promotion twice in as many years, the Northcote City squad has not been changed greatly in that time frame. James Kalifatidis, a new signing from Clifton Hill, was still serving a suspension from last season. Recent acquisition from South Melbourne Ahmet Turer was handed a starting debut with 2009 Division One Best and Fairest winner Trent Rixon leading the line up front.

The early stages of the game were uneventful, both teams adjusting to the intensity of competitive football for the first time in five months. In the twelfth minute Daniel Visevic put a low shot wide of the post after receiving the ball from Alex Tabor on the right. Nine minutes later Tom Milardovic presented Northcote with an opening, a poor free kick turned over to Nick Curtis, who played the ball wide to Rixon in the clear on his right, but Milardovic redeemed himself by cutting out the attempted through ball back into the middle.

A surging run forward from Richmond skipper Dimitri Tsiaras in the twenty-fourth minute saw him upended by Adrian Chiappetta, who earned a yellow card in conceding the free kick. From twenty-eight yards Visevic stepped up and curled the free kick into the top corner of the net, putting the Eagles ahead.

The lead should have been doubled six minutes later. When a corner kick was clear out from the far post to the edge of the box, Stefan Piorkowski twisted and turned looking for an opportunity to shoot which failed to present itself. He carried the ball across the top of the box before finding an unmarked Milos Lujic on his left, but Lujic ballooned his shot over the bar from twelve yards out with the goal almost empty.

A minute later the action was at the other end. Under strong pressure from Rixon, Gal was unable to claim a cross from the left, the ball falling to Marco Rosano on the edge of the area who had his low drive cleared off the line by Milardovic. Bradley Norton was booked a minute later when Visevic went down after an elbow to the face. The resulting free kick saw Tabor flick the ball onto to Andrew Viola who had his volley saved by Chris Theodoridis-Petropoulos.

Late in the half, with Richmond looking to hold their lead into the break, Erhan Karahan also went into the book after his elbow connected

with the head of Jonathan Voulgaris. When the half-time whistle came it remained 1-0 to the hosts, with both sides have yet to really hit their stride.

Ahmet Turer fired a shot over the bar from the edge of the box shortly after play resumed, before the start of the second half became as uneventful as the start of the first. In the sixty-sixth minute Richmond won a free kick on the left, which saw Visevic whip the ball low across to the far post where Richmond players were lining up to slot it home, Tsiaras doing the honours with a sliding finish.

Three minutes later a volley on the turn by Tabor went wide, before Northcote lifted their game as Richmond seemed content to sit on their lead. When a shot went across the face of goal in the seventy-sixth minute, Rixon picked up the ball on a tight angle inside the six yard box, but his shot was blocked for a corner after he had to cut back to get a sight on goal.

A minute later Northcote earned a penalty when Piorkowski brought down John Theofilopoulos. Though Gal guessed which way Rixon would send his spot kick, the strike was simply too good and Northcote had pulled the score back to 2-1 setting up a tense finale.

Five minutes later Rixon's diving header from a cross by Harry Kinigopoulos went wide. Northcote went even closer to grabbing the equaliser in the eighty-seventh minute, as a header from Chiappetta at a corner went agonisingly over the crossbar. Richmond managed to ride out the rest of the game, to mark a fifth successive opening day victory in the VPL.

The final result would be a relief for Richmond, who had to battle to hang onto the win after losing their early ascendancy. Northcote would feel they could have gotten something out of the game, and will now have to look to getting off the mark in their visit to Oakleigh Cannons on Friday. The same night Richmond will be at home again, hosting Green Gully.



The new season at Kevin Bartlett Reserve was officially celebrated with the assistance of Melbourne Ward Councillors, Alison Clarke and Josh Funder. Josh is pictured here with Eagles President Helmut Kalitzki, former Soccerroo Eddie Krncevic and members of the club.

PHOTO: PETER PSARROS



ALTONA MAGIC



1

SOUTH MELBOURNE



1

Match Details:

Altona Magic: T. Tomich, A. Koltovski (S. Masalkovski 84'), D. Mladenovic, D. Radojicic, K. Delev (A. Sanad 46'), P. Sivevski, K. Taseski, T. Saric, S. Bozinovski, S. Kovacevic, P. Cergovski

Scorer: T. Saric 30'

Yellow cards: A. Koltovski

Red cards: None

South Melbourne: P. Zois, R. Tavsancioglu, J. Stefanou, S. O'Dor, R. Payne, J. Youssef (F. De Moraes 61'), S. Petrovic, M. Gasparis (S. Vranesivic 78'), D. Vasilevski, S. Torrens, G. De Nittis

Scorer: De Moraes 86'

Yellow cards: None

Red cards: None

Man of the Match: D. Vasilevski

Venue: Paisley Park

Crowd: 800



Crunch time ... Joey Youssef is the meat in the sandwich  
PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON



Scorer of the equaliser, Fernando De Moraes (#15) gets a pat on the back from captain, Rama Tavsancioglu. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

# South breaks hoodoo

By John Kyrou

**SOUTH Melbourne FC broke its Paisley Park hoodoo when the Blues recorded a hard-fought 1-1 away draw against Altona Magic on Sunday afternoon.**

Substitute Fernando De Moraes' late equalising goal was enough to earn the side a share of the spoils in the club's opening match of the 2010 Victorian Premier League season.

South entered the match knowing all too well the horrible record the side had suffered at Paisley Park in recent years. Since re-joining the VPL in 2005, South had played Altona in five matches at the venue and lost every single time. In the previous meeting (round 21, 2009) it had been a resounding 3-0 demolition job by the Magic, with South goalkeeper Tommi Tomich enduring a nightmare game in goals.

This time around, Tomich was in between the sticks for the Magic following his off-season switch to Paisley Park. Ex-South boy Danni Radojicic joined Tomich in the starting eleven for Altona, whilst former South goalkeeper Andrew Sftekopoulos and former midfielder Jose Vasquez were on the bench for the Magic. South's starting eleven comprised of four new signings, with two former Altona players in Peter Zois and Daniel Vasilevski as well as James Stefanou and Marinos Gasparis.

The first half was an even affair, with few chances created by both sides. South nearly had a dream start less than two minutes in, when a shot from Vasilevski on the left side flew across goal. With Tomich beaten, Gasparis was just unable to connect with the ball, which would have resulted in a



Altona Magic players celebrate their go-ahead goal. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

simple tap-in. Despite South's pressure, Tomich seemed comfortable in goals for the home side, something that South had needed so desperately for most of the previous season.

Fifteen minutes into the game, Altona almost had a freak goal, when a rushed defensive clearance from half-way nearly caught Zois off-guard. The custodian had the goal covered, but at the last minute lost his bearings and had to push the ball away for a corner. Shortly after, a set piece was fired into the South area. Zois came out to punch in front of a sea of bodies but could only clear the ball as far as the waiting Tony Saric at the edge of the area. He fired the ball into the net for the open-

ing goal.

South stepped up the pressure in the second half and was unlucky not to be level on two occasions. Firstly, Gianni De Nittis was clearly onside following a beautiful through-ball by Joseph Youssef, but was denied by an offside flag. Secondly, a turn and shot by De Nittis was palmed clear for a corner by Tomich, who was desperate for a clean sheet against his old side. Altona by this stage were happy to defend in numbers before trying to catch the away side on the counter-attack.

South coach Vaughan Coveny introduced De Moraes into the contest with half an hour remaining and the Futsal-roo repaid the faith by equalising with

four minutes remaining. De Moraes was put through one-on-one with Tomich, and with two Altona defenders on his toes, managed to get around Tomich before chipping the ball into the open goal, sending the hundreds of travelling South fans wild on the nearby hill.

Altona face the NTC in a practice match on Wednesday night before playing Sunshine George Cross at Knights Stadium next Sunday. On the same day, South play host to newly-promoted Bentleigh at Bob Jane Stadium and will be keen on revenge following the penalty-shootout loss to the Greens in the Hellenic Cup final last week.



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GREEN GULLY



1

HUME CITY



2

## Match Details:

Green Gully  
K.Gerohchristodoulou,  
S.Burton, D.Fak, C.Drake,  
J.Fleming, G.Wales,  
G.Hockless, M.Sanders(N.  
Robinson 75'),  
M.Medjedovic, A.Vargas,  
J.Munoz(N.Robinson 80').

Scorer: G.Hockless 57'

Yellow Cards: G.Hockless

Hume City  
L.Acevski, I.Erdogan,  
S.Pace, P.Riccobene,  
R.Cardozo, M.Karakilic,  
A.Vlahos(R.Thompson  
60'), G.Talevski, T.Baser,  
Z.Petrevski, M.Bosovski.

Scorers: T.Baser 55',  
R.Cardozo 70'

Red Cards: R.Thompson

Man of the Match: Tansel  
BaserVenue: Green Gully Re-  
serve

Crowd: 1500



Hume's match winner, Richie Cardozo.  
PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS



The two most recent Gold Medalists, Ross Thompson (Hume) and Graham Hockless (Gully), go to combat for the ball. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

# Gully foiled by Hume

## Cardozo nicks it for ten-man visitors

By Markian Jaworsky

**NEW** boy Graham Hockless made an impressive start for the Green Gully Cavaliers, but it was not enough to salvage a result for the home team. Talking after the match, Graham was quick to state his disappointment at losing in his first official league match for his new club; "I won't be going home tonight thinking about my goal, but rather thinking about what I need to do to help Gully win."

Gully started the match well, having the advantage of the wind in the first half, and putting Hume goalkeeper Lou Acevski under much pressure. New Gully striker Gary Wales was in the thick of the action, but could not find a decisive touch to get the ball into the back of the Hume goal. Gully started the match with four new faces from the team that played Hume City in the finals series in 2009.

Kyrakos Gerohchristodoulou played in goals, and Jonathan Munoz played as right midfielder, along side Hockless and Wales.

Munoz linked up well with Andy Vargas in the first half, and a lot of Gully's attacking moves come down the right wing. Against the run of play, Hume were awarded a penalty after half an hour. Zoran Petrevski did well to place the ball inside the right post, however Gully keeper Gerohchristodoulou pulled off a remarkable save.

After halftime, Hume City lifted their game. Tansel Baser scored rocket volley in the 55th minute, however Gully's Graham Hockless equalised with a fine individual strike on goal shortly after to restore parity. Hume brought on Ross Thompson on the hour and within ten minutes, Ross found himself sent off after a clash with Hockless.

Just as supporters thought the game



The match boils over as the referee tries to maintain order.  
PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

would have fallen into Gully's hands, Hume continued unfazed by their setback, taking the lead with a Ritchie Cardozo backpost header. Despite being a player down, the Hume City forward managed to find plenty of space at the backpost and give the visitors an unlikely lead.

Gully coach Peter Ollerton swapped Matthew Sanders for new forward Nick Robinson, and Jonathan Munoz for yet another new Gully player in Joshua Groenewald. Jeffrey Flem-

ing came close to equalising with some five minutes left on the clock, but Gully were ineffective as the final whistle blew. Peter Ollerton refused to comment to local newspapers after the match.

New Gully Under 21 coach Lubo Lapsansky's team were also unstuck by the travelling Hume City, losing 0-2 in his first match in charge. Gully will travel to Richmond on Friday night in round 2 of the VPL.



Ross Thompson seeks answers.  
PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS



DANDENONG THUNDER



2

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS



1

## Match Details

Dandenong Thunder:  
Webster S., Rexhepi S., Osman L., Wilford A., Bright J., Armenian H., Miller L. (Ukali D 27'), Stergiopoulos M., Davidson, R., Korcari, V., Dilorio, J.( Bourakis, A.88')

Scorers: Rexhepi 4', Dilorio 26'

Melbourne Knights:  
Loncaric, A., Filipovic, R., Rocco, D., Cannell, L., Magdic, J., Praiz, I. ( Rodriguez T. 57') Townson, K., Zahra, A., Skaka, T., Dubois, J., Colosimo, A. ( Colosimo, J 46')

Scorer: Dubois 78'

Yellow: Canwell, Dubois  
Red: Townson 67'



Thunder's match winner Joey Di lorio climbs up high to win the header in front of the patriotic home crowd. PHOTO BY STEVE STAREK

# Thunder rattles Knights

By George Stogiannou

**A familiar looking Dandenong Thunder outfit quickly got down to business by kicking off its Premier League campaign with a 2-1 win over a new look Melbourne Knights at George Andrews reserve on Saturday evening.**

Playing in ideal conditions on a lush green pitch, the home team settled quickly going onto the front foot early against a conservative 5-4-1 Knights line up. The home fans were soon celebrating the first goal of the season when local favourite, defender Shane Rexhepi headed home a Marcus Stergiopoulos corner in the fourth minute. The Thunder fans thought they had a second when striker Joe Dilorio capitalized on an error from a nervous Knights defence to fire in at the ten minute mark only for the linesman to signal an offside sparking protests from the striker and his teammates.

Thunder continued to mount pressure on the Knights goal with headed attempts from Veton Korcari ,Dilorio and Hamlet Armenian. Dilorio looked in menacing form and when the lively Armenian cut the ball back from the right flank, DiLorio produced a signature goal. With his back to goal, the sharpshooter received the ball in the box, produced one of his trademark turns and struck a low left foot shot past Knights keeper Anthony Lonacanic to give Thunder a comfortable 2-0 lead inside the half hour. Thunder continued to control possession with the midfield combining well with their forwards. In contrast, the Knights playing with lone striker Jean Dubois, struggled in the final third.



Shane Rexhepi opens the new season with a bang. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

Knights coach Ivan Duzel introduced second striker Jacob Colosimo after the break to inject some life up front. Josip Magdic spurned the best chance for the visitors soon afterwards when he shot tamely into Thunder keeper Stuart Webster's arms.

When the Knights lost Kevin Townson to a second yellow midway through the second half, their cause appeared lost, but they continued to press forward and

found an unexpected lifeline when striker Dubois headed home a corner in the 78th minute. It made for a nervous last ten minutes for the home team, prompting the withdrawal of striker DiLorio and the introduction of a midfielder to tighten the midfield up for the Thunder. Knights midfielder Tiago Rodriguez, tried some long distance shots for the Knights as they desperately searched for an equalizer but in the end they had to settle for



Jean Charles Dubois pulls one back for the Knights. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

an honourable defeat.

Knights coach Duzel found cause for optimism in the second half performance of his team. " I think overall we played a not bad game as we struggled to make the team this year with 17-18 new players under contract. All new players. I'm going to need a couple more weeks to settle everything down...The third minute goal from a corner free header was a total disappointment because we had taller players than them in defence. I believe that goal cost us the game.... I think we deserved more than what we got tonight with three or four clear chances in the second half. All credit to my boys. With the kind of character they showed in the second half, I believe we have a good future."

Dandenong coach Stuart Munro commented after the match, " That's what you want to be honest, a winning start to the season. Probably seventy five minutes of the game I'm happy with. I thought we did well and we controlled a fair part of the game. But in the last

15 minutes it was very disappointing. We seemed to turn our back on play too often and just seemed to switch off too often. But certainly the first 75 minutes we deserved to be in front.

On today's evidence Thunder showed they'll be a force again this year, but they're not yet the finished article with a question mark remaining on the left side of the park. Coach Munro acknowledging they're yet to find a solution, " It's a real struggle at the moment in the wide left position." Next week they hit the road to take on Hume United. For the Knights the team showed good fighting spirit in the second half but in truth were fortunate to be only two goals down at the break. Coach Duzel confirmed that former Socceroo Danny Tiatto will turn out for his beloved Knights in the next two home matches. Depending on his fitness levels, his experience will be invaluable in their next match at home to Heidelberg United.



SUNSHINE GEORGIES



3

HEIDELBERG UNITED



2



Goals galore at KNights Stadium last night. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

# Georgies in a thriller!

By Luke Sheehan

**Sunshine George Cross defeated Heidelberg United 3-2 in a Sunday night thriller at Knights Stadium, in a spirited performance from George Cross to begin its 2010 Victorian Premier League campaign.**

George Cross led 2-0 after 28 minutes, but a rare goalkeeping error from Martin John saw a goalmouth scramble produce Heidelberg's first goal through Osagie Ederaro, and put the game back in the balance at half time.

Sunshine then re-established its two-goal buffer on 75 minutes, but an own goal from a Heidelberg corner ensured some frantic moments for the George Cross defence in the remaining minutes.

However, the story of the match was the first-half sending off of Heidelberg's number 10 (no team sheet available) for an elbow on his George Cross opponent. The incident came in the 24th minute, where the Heidelberg player was running with the ball, before an opponent tugged his shirt.

The foul was paid, but as the whistle blew, the Heidelberg player lashed out towards the culprit, who fell to the ground.

The referee made no hesitation in pulling out the card immediately, much to the shock of the Heidelberg players and coach George Katsakis.

"To go down ten men so early in the game for something so minor, if there was a blatant elbow there with maybe a bit of blood and something that we could retrospect to that, but I felt there was nothing in it," Katsakis said.

The boy reckons he did nothing wrong. Watching two other premier league games today and yesterday, there were a lot worse than that, and they were only cautioned.

"First things first, I think the federation need to get that right, to be honest. I'm only speaking my mind, and I know people aren't going to like it, but I'm not

one to cry over a result when its fairly won or lost, but today I felt we were hard done by."

George Cross coach Andy O'Dell said he did not see the incident.

"To be honest with you, I turned around and next thing I know there's a red card. I got told he did take a swing, so if there's intent he's got to go, but I didn't see it."

O'Dell said he was happy with the points, but is not getting carried away with the Georgies victory.

"Yeah good win, a bit of relief. One win doesn't make a season, its good to get a good start but we've got a long way to go. Not get carried away.

"I'll enjoy my night, but we've got a long way to go."

Katsakis praised the George Cross outfit, but also took positives out of the loss for United.

"A lot of credit has got to go to George Cross. Their intensity, endeavour and their will to win was very good, and to say that at the least we've come away from home and scored two goals is always positive."

Heidelberg coach George Katsakis

"its always difficult to come off a loss first game of the year, it's a bit frustrating, it's a bit hard, I think what we need to concentrate on is the positives that came out of today's game. For a squad that's just been formed over the last six weeks or so, but nevertheless, I thought that maybe our intensity could have been a bit greater. I'm not one to soak at results, I thought the refereeing could have been a bit better to be honest, and I thought there were a couple of crucial decisions that were made, that possibly changed that game. To go down ten men so early in the game for something so minor, if there was a blatant elbow there with maybe a bit of blood and something that we could retrospect to that, but I felt there was nothing in it. The boy reckons he did nothing wrong. Watching two other premier league games today and

yesterday, there were a lot worse than that, and they were only cautioned. First things first, I think the federation need to get that right, to be honest. I'm only speaking my mind, and I know people aren't going to like it, but I'm not one to cry over a result when its fairly won or lost, but today I felt we were hard done by.

"Absolutely (back four still gelling together). There's four boys who have never played with each other, they've come from different clubs, two boys from overseas, one carrying an injury, we took the punt to try and play him that didn't come off for us, and that unsettled the balance of the whole team. But overall, it was an average performance, a lot of credit's gotta go to George Cross. Their intensity, endeavour and their will to win was very good, and to say that at the least we've come away from home and scored two goals is always positive. So we've gotta take that on board as well.

Sunshine coach Andy O'Dell

"Yeah good win, a bit of relief. One win doesn't make a season, its good to get a good start but we've got a long way to go. Not get carried away.

"I'm more worried about the goals we conceded, the team I've got this season will always score goals. I think I've changed my team around a little bit. Second goal was an own goal, I'll enjoy my night, but we've got a long way to go.

"To be honest with you, I turned around and next thing I know there's a red card. I got told he did take a swing, so if there's intent he's got to go, but I didn't see it. And it changed the game as well, and when it went to 3-1 we were pushing people on, and when the second one went in, I was panicking a little bit, but I think we deserved it in the end. We played some good football.

"He said he caught it, and the boy bumped him. Long way to go."



The Georgies celebrate. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

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OAKLEIGH CANNONS



1

BENTLEIGH GREENS



1

Match Details:

Oakleigh Cannons 1  
(Cameron Watson, 28m)

Bentleigh Greens 1  
(Johnny Sapazovski, 39m)

Vebue: jack edwards re-  
serve  
Crowd: 3200



Cannons keeper Adrian Cagallj tips the ball away to safety as the Greens apply the opening onslaught. PHOTO: PETER KAKALIAS

# Derby ends in draw

By John Lister

**FOR a much anticipated season opener, the clash between Premier League stalwarts the Oakleigh Cannons and new arrivals the Bentleigh Greens, fell curiously flat.**

Certainly the 3000 plus who turned out at the Jack Edwards Reserve on a balmy night on Friday would have anticipated more.

The Cannons with John Anastasiadis at the coaching helm for the second year and with some impressive pre-season form behind them, would have expected more while the Greens, perhaps nervous at what awaited them in the top league, would have wanted more after finding they were more than a match in what should have been a tough fixture.

Infact the biggest highlight of the night was the small grass fire started near the railway reserve, probably by flares let off at the start of the second half. The sirens and lights of the fire trucks enlivened the second period when neither team could establish any dominance.

The final 1-1 result was fair, the Cannons had the best of the first half and started the second brightly before the visitors came back hard. When the whistle blew, the Greens could consider themselves unlucky not to have taken all the points.

When new recruit Cameron Watson opened the scorecard for the new season in the 28th minute most Cannons' faithful would have anticipated more to follow. Oakleigh started the game brightly with Jerry Karpeh imposing himself at the front and the Green struggling to find the pace.

Watson's goal was well taken. A series of shots had the Bentleigh defence in disarray and Watson's final effort crashed through,

But the celebrations only lasted 10 minutes. Bentleigh, stung into ac-

tion caught the Cannon's defence flat footed and a low cross from the left found Johnny Sapazovski on his own to sidefoot in.

That was that. The second half promised more of the same but after Oakleigh forced a series of corners in the first 10 minutes they rarely threatened again. At the other end Sapazovski crashed a free kick against the underside of the bar as the Greens finished strongly.

Anastasiadis was non-committal. "I thought a draw was probably a fair result. It was a warm night and both teams fought hard. We played well in the first half, but lost our direction at the end of the second half, perhaps because of tiredness or lack of concentration.

"We want to attack this season and score more goals. I thought the signs were promising."

This Friday Oakleigh is at home again, taking on other promotion hopefuls Northcote City at 8.30pm while Bentleigh travels to the Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday to meet South Melbourne (5pm).



Johnny Sapazovski finds the onion bag on debut for the Greens. PHOTO BY PETER KAKALIAS

*Editor's note: In last week's VPL Previews we wrongly stated that Felix Rosman is the captain of Oakleigh Cannons. Rosman moved to Port Melbourne Sharks during the summer and Stelios Drakos will wear the captain's armband this year. Football Feature on Drakos in next week's GW.*



Oakleigh's Stuart Webster springs over Dennis Alialovic to win the aerial contest. PHOTO: PETER KAKALIAS



George Goutzioulis sends the cross in for Johnny Sapazovski to tap home PHOTO: PETER KAKALIAS



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